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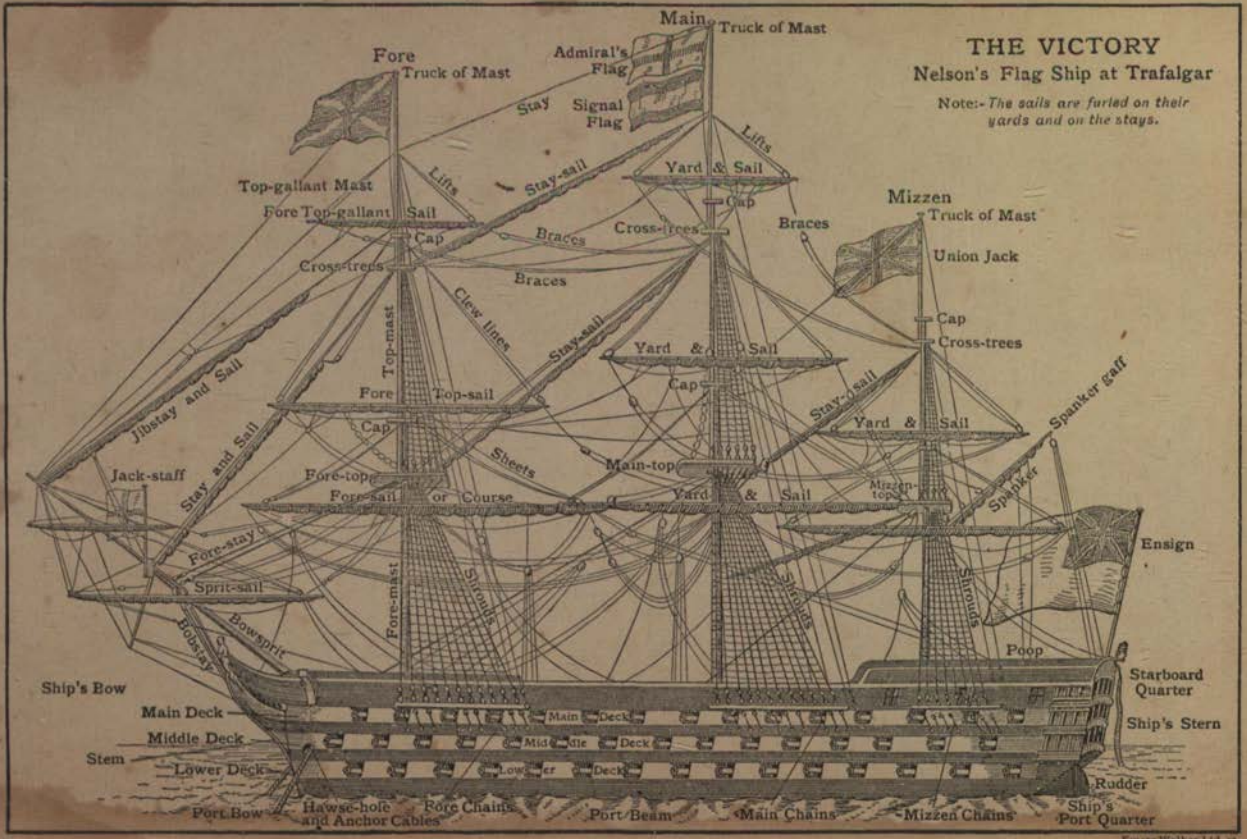
SOUTHEY'S LIFE OF NELSON


THE VICTORY
Nelson's Flag Ship at Trafalgar
Note:- The sails are furled on their yards and on the stays.
Main
Truck of Mast
Admiral's Flag
Signal Flag
Fore
Truck of Mast
Stay
Lifts
Yard & Sail
Cap
Top-gallant Mast
Fore Top-gallant Sail
Stay-sail
Braces
Cross-trees
Mizzen
Truck of Mast
Union Jack
Cap
Cross-trees
Clew lines
Top-mast
Yard & Sail
Fore Top-sail
Jibstay and Sail
Stay and Sail
Jack-staff
Fore-top
Fore-sail or Course
Main-top
Mizzen-top
Spanker gaff
Spanker
Sheets
Fore-stay
Sprit-sail
Bobstay
Bowsprit
Fore-mast
Shrouds
Ensign
Poop
Starboard Quarter
Ship's Bow
Main Deck
Middle Deck
Lower Deck
Stem
Ship's Stern
Rudder
Port Bow
Hawse-hole and Anchor Cables
Fore Chains
Port Beam
Main Chains
Mizzen Chains
Ship's Port Quarter
Emery Walker, Ltd. sc.

LONGMANS' CLASS-BOOKS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE LIFE OF NELSON

(ABRIDGED)

BY

ROBERT SOUTHEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

J. C. ALLEN

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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INTRODUCTION

SOUTHEY'S 'Life of Nelson' is one of the model biographies in the English language. A writer, in order to produce a good biography, should direct all his faculties to giving a true account of the subject of his biography. To do this it is necessary that he should suppress his own opinions, and exercise the greatest restraint upon himself, indulging in comments only when by so doing he can elucidate the truth. Another essential is that the writer should use clear, good prose, which should convey his meaning to the mind of the reader with the least apparent effort. By a close attention to these matters a good biography may be composed; but it is not everyone who, having a competent use of language, can so far suppress himself as to produce an unbiassed picture of the subject of his biography. Robert Southey possessed these qualities in a high degree, and they are exemplified in his biography of Nelson.

Before reading his 'Life of Nelson' let us glance at Robert Southey's literary career with a view to fixing in our minds the place he holds in English literature.

Southey was born in the year 1774 and lived in stirring times, when England was justifying her history not only by battle on sea and land, but in the domain of literature. While Nelson and Wellington were obtaining victory for England in war, several great men of letters at home were beginning to write poems and prose that would take a high place in her literary history. The most famous of these were Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (his name is usually given in full to distinguish him from his

brother Hartley, who was also a poet), Scott, Southey, Charles Lamb, and, a little later, Byron.

It is a curious thing that a writer often is unable to choose for himself the kind of literature that he is best fitted to produce. Thus Scott, who began his literary career as a poet and produced some real poetry, achieved his greatest fame as a novelist. Charles Lamb, who tried to write poetry and drama, became one of the greatest of English essayists. Similarly Southey's ambition was to write poetry while his real gift was for biography. The exercise of restraint that is necessary in the composition of poetry, however, is good training for the writing of prose, and to Southey's poetic activity must be attributed to some extent the clear, lucid style of his prose writing.

Another of Southey's characteristics was his industry, for, by the time he was eight years of age, he had read all the plays in his aunt's library. This thirst for reading signified in Southey a love for literature that was born in him. It gave promise of a taste, that, if cultivated, would enable him to develop literary power of his own.

Southey, at school, gave little attention to the lessons that were set. He devoted his energies, instead, to the reading of subjects of his own choice, being particularly fond of old tales and myths.

On leaving Westminster School, he went to Balliol College, Oxford. In 1794 he met Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and he and Coleridge and another friend, Lovell, collaborated in the composition of a tragedy on the fall of Robespierre, a leading figure in France at the time of the French Revolution which took place while Southey was at school. In 1795 he went to Lisbon and began to write a history of Portugal that occupied from time to time a large part of his life, but was never completely published. On his return to England, and being now married, he went to live at Keswick in the Lake district. Wordsworth lived at Grasmere, near by, and Coleridge's family lived in a house that adjoined the Southeys'. During this time Southey was constantly active in literary com-

position. He published 'Thalaba' in 1801 and 'Madre' in 1805, two poems that had considerable success at the time, the subjects of both being taken from ancient mythology. He also continued his reading, collecting for himself a library of fourteen thousand volumes. His 'History of Brazil,' being a part of the 'History of Portugal,' was published about this time, and was written in a style that approached in lucidity that of his best work. 'The Curse of Kehama,' a poem taken from Hindu mythology, and 'Roderick, the last of the Goths,' appeared next, the latter containing Southey's best blank verse. In the intervals between the production of his larger works Southey was busily engaged on many miscellaneous writings. About this time he became a contributor to the *Quarterly Review*, which had recently been founded and become famous. One of his articles, about forty pages in length, was a life of Nelson. At the request of the publisher of the Review, John Murray, Southey sat down to rewrite this article in an expanded form; and thus came into being, not by the writer's own volition so much as by the discernment of a friend, a classic of the English language.

In the year 1820 Southey published a 'Life of Wesley,' which is also an admirable biography, and was Coleridge's favourite book. Later he wrote lives of Bunyan and Cowper, and in 1835 received a communication from Sir Robert Peel in which that great statesman 'did himself the honour' to bestow on Southey a pension of £300 a year, and at the same time offered him a baronetcy, which Southey declined.

In 1837, on the death of his wife, Southey's health began to fail, and in 1843 he died of a fever, memorials to him being placed in Westminster Abbey and the cathedral of Bristol, the city of his birth.

In this edition of the Life of Nelson the text has not been altered except that portions have been cut out to reduce the volume to the necessary length.

ORIGINAL PREFACE

'MANY lives of NELSON have been written: one is yet wanting clear and concise enough to become a manual for the young sailor, which he may carry about with him till he has treasured up the example in his memory and in his heart. In attempting such a work, I shall write the eulogy of our great naval Hero; for the best eulogy of NELSON is the faithful history of his actions: the best history that which shall relate them most perspicuously.'

Preface to Southey's Life of Nelson.

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THE LIFE OF NELSON

CHAPTER I

HORATIO, son of Edmund and Catherine Nelson, was born September 29th, 1758, in the parsonage-house of Burnham-Thorpe, a village in the county of Norfolk, of which his father was rector. The maiden name of his mother was Suckling: her grandmother was an elder sister of Sir Robert Walpole, and this child was named after his godfather, the first Lord Walpole. Mrs. Nelson died in 1767, leaving eight out of eleven children. Her brother, Captain Maurice Suckling, of the navy, visited the widower upon this event, and promised to take care of one of the boys. Three years afterwards, when Horatio was only twelve years of age, being at home during the Christmas holidays, he read in the county newspaper that his uncle was appointed to the *Raisonnable*, of 64 guns. 'Do, William,' said he to a brother who was a year and a half older than himself, 'write to my father, and tell him that I should like to go to sea with uncle Maurice.' Mr. Nelson was then at Bath, whither he had gone for the recovery of his health: his circumstances were straitened, and he had no prospect of ever seeing them bettered: he knew that it was the wish of providing for himself by which Horatio was chiefly actuated; and did not oppose his resolution; he understood also the boy's character, and had always said, that in whatever station he might be

placed, he would climb if possible to the very top of the tree. Accordingly Captain Suckling was written to. 'What,' said he in his answer, 'has poor Horatio done, who is so weak that, he, above all the rest, should be sent to rough it out at sea? But let him come; and the first time we go into action, a cannon-ball may knock off his head, and provide for him at once.'

It is manifest from these words, that Horatio was not the boy whom his uncle would have chosen to bring up in his own profession. He was never of a strong body; and the ague, which at that time was one of the most common diseases in England, had greatly reduced his strength; yet he had already given proofs of that resolute heart and nobleness of mind, which, during his whole career of labour and of glory, so eminently distinguished him. When a mere child, he strayed a bird's-nesting from his grandmother's house in company with a cow-boy; the dinner-hour elapsed; he was absent, and could not be found; and the alarm of the family became very great, for they apprehended that he might have been carried off by gipsies. At length, after search had been made for him in various directions, he was discovered alone, sitting composedly by the side of a brook which he could not get over. 'I wonder, child,' said the old lady when she saw him, 'that hunger and fear did not drive you home.' 'Fear! grandmamma,' replied the future hero, 'I never saw fear:—What is it?' Once, after the winter holidays, when he and his brother William had set off on horseback to return to school, they came back, because there had been a fall of snow; and William, who did not much like the journey, said it was too deep for them to venture on. 'If that be the case,' said the father, 'you certainly shall not go; but make another attempt, and I will leave it to your honour. If the road is dangerous, you may return: but remember, boys, I leave it to your honour.' The snow was deep enough to have afforded them a reasonable excuse; but Horatio was not to be prevailed upon to turn back. 'We must go on,' said he: 'remember, brother,

it was left to our honour.' There were some fine pears growing in the schoolmaster's garden, which the boys regarded as lawful booty, and in the highest degree tempting; but the boldest among them were afraid to venture for the prize. Horatio volunteered upon this service: he was lowered down at night from the bedroom window by some sheets, plundered the tree, was drawn up with the pears, and then distributed them among his school-fellows without reserving any for himself. 'He only took them,' he said, 'because every other boy was afraid.'

Early on a cold and dark spring morning Mr. Nelson's servant arrived at this school, at North Walsham, with the expected summons for Horatio to join his ship. The parting from his brother William, who had been for so many years his playmate and bed-fellow, was a painful effort, and was the beginning of those privations which are the sailor's lot through life. He accompanied his father to London. The *Raisonnable* was lying in the Medway. He was put into the Chatham stage, and on its arrival was set down with the rest of the passengers, and left to find his way on board as he could. After wandering about in the cold, without being able to reach the ship, an officer observed the forlorn appearance of the boy, questioned him; and, happening to be acquainted with his uncle, took him home and gave him some refreshments. When he got on board, Captain Suckling was not in the ship, nor had any person been apprised of the boy's coming. He paced the deck the whole remainder of the day, without being noticed by any one; and it was not till the second day that somebody, as he expressed it, 'took compassion on him.' Nelson had a feeble body and an affectionate heart, and he remembered through life his first days of wretchedness in the service.

When the *Raisonnable* was paid off Captain Suckling was removed to the *Triumph*, seventy-four, then stationed as a guardship in the Thames. This was considered as too inactive a life for a boy, and Nelson was therefore sent a voyage to the West Indies in a merchant-ship,

commanded by Mr. John Rathbone, an excellent seaman, who had served as Master's Mate under Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*. He returned a practical seaman, but with a hatred of the king's service, and a saying then common among the sailors—'Aft the most honour; forward the better man.' Rathbone had probably been disappointed and disgusted in the navy; and, with no unfriendly intentions, warned Nelson against a profession which he himself had found hopeless. His uncle received him on board the *Triumph* on his return, and discovering his dislike to the navy, took the best means of reconciling him to it. He held it out as a reward, that if he attended well to his navigation he should go in the cutter and decked long-boat,[1] which was attached to the commanding-officer's ship at Chatham. Thus he became a good pilot for vessels of that description, from Chatham to the Tower, and down the Swin Channel to the North Foreland, and acquired a confidence among rocks and sands, of which he often felt the value.

Nelson had not been many months on board the *Triumph*, when his love of enterprise was excited by hearing that two ships were fitting out for a voyage of discovery toward the North Pole. In consequence of the difficulties which were expected on such a service, these vessels were to take out effective men instead of the usual number of boys. This, however, did not deter him from soliciting to be received, and, by his uncle's interest, he was admitted under Captain Lutwidge. The voyage was undertaken in compliance with an application from the Royal Society. The Hon. Captain Constantine John Phipps, eldest son of Lord Mulgrave, volunteered his services. The *Racehorse* and *Carcass* were selected, as the strongest ships, and, therefore, best adapted for such a voyage; and they were taken into dock and strengthened, to render them as secure as possible against the ice. Two

[1] To be in command of a boat sailing to and fro between the ship and shore was the ambition of every midshipman.

masters of Greenlandmen[1] were employed as pilots for each ship. No expedition was ever more carefully fitted out; and the first Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Sandwich, with a laudable solicitude, went on board himself, before their departure, to see that everything had been completed to the wish of the officers. The ships were provided with a simple and excellent apparatus for distilling fresh from salt water, the invention of Dr. Irving, who accompanied the expedition. It consisted merely in fitting a tube to the ship's kettle, and applying a wet mop to the surface, as the vapour was passing. By these means, from thirty-four to forty gallons were produced every day.

They sailed from the Nore on the 4th of June: on the 6th of the following month they were in lat. 79° 56′ 39″; long. 9° 43′ 30″ E. The next day, about the place where most of the old discoverers had been stopped, the *Racehorse* was beset with ice; but they hove her through with ice-anchors. Captain Phipps continued ranging along the ice, northward and westward, till the 24th; he then tried to the eastward. On the 30th he was in lat. 80° 13′, long. 18° 48′ E., among the islands and in the ice, with no appearance of an opening for the ships. The weather was exceedingly fine, mild, and unusually clear. Here they were becalmed in a large bay, with three apparent openings between the islands which formed it; but everywhere, as far as they could see, surrounded with ice. There was not a breath of air, the water was perfectly smooth, the ice covered with snow, low and even, except a few broken pieces near the edge; and the pools of water in the middle of the ice-fields just crusted over with young ice. On the next day the ice closed upon them, and no opening was to be seen anywhere, except a hole or lake, as it might be called, of about a mile and a half in circumference, where the ships lay fast to the ice with their ice-anchors. From these ice-fields they filled their

[1] Captains of ships that went to Greenland after whales and were therefore acquainted with those seas.

casks with water, which was very pure and soft. The men were playing on the ice all day; but the Greenland pilots, who were further than they had ever been before, and considered that the season was far advancing, were alarmed at being thus beset.

The next day there was not the smallest opening, the ships were within less than two lengths of each other, separated by ice, and neither having room to turn. The ice, which the day before had been flat, and almost level with the water's edge, was now in many places forced higher than the mainyard, by the pieces squeezing together. A day of thick fog followed; it was succeeded by clear weather; but the passage by which the ships had entered from the westward was closed, and no open water was in sight, either in that or any other quarter. By the pilots' advice the men were set to cut a passage and warp through the small openings to the westward. They sawed through pieces of ice twelve feet thick; and this labour continued the whole day, during which their utmost efforts did not move the ships above three hundred yards; while they were driven, together with the ice, far to the N.E. and E. by the current. Sometimes a field of several acres square would be lifted up between two larger islands, and incorporated with them; and thus these larger pieces continued to grow by aggregation. Another day passed, and there seemed no probability of getting the ships out without a strong E. or N.E. wind. The season was far advanced, and every hour lessened the chance of extricating themselves. Young as he was, Nelson was appointed to command one of the boats which were sent out to explore a passage into the open water. It was the means of saving a boat belonging to the *Racehorse* from a singular but imminent danger. Some of the officers had fired at and wounded a walrus. As no other animal has so human-like an expression in its countenance, so also is there none that seems to possess more of the passions of humanity. The wounded animal dived immediately, and brought up a number of its companions; and they all

joined in an attack upon the boat. They wrested an oar from one of the men ; and it was with the utmost difficulty that the crew could prevent them from staving or upsetting her, till the *Carcass's* boat came up : and the walruses, finding their enemies thus reinforced, dispersed. Young Nelson exposed himself in a more daring manner. One

NELSON AND THE BEAR

night, during the mid-watch, he stole from the ship with one of his comrades, taking advantage of a rising fog, and set off over the ice in pursuit of a bear. It was not long before they were missed. The fog thickened, and Capt. Lutwidge and his officers became exceedingly alarmed for their safety. Between three and four in the morning the weather cleared, and the two adventurers were seen,

at a considerable distance from the ship, attacking a huge bear. The signal for them to return was immediately made: Nelson's comrade called upon him to obey it, but in vain; his musket had flashed in the pan; their ammunition was expended; and a chasm in the ice, which divided him from the bear, probably preserved his life. 'Never mind,' he cried; 'do but let me get a blow at this devil with the butt-end of my musket, and we shall have him.' Captain Lutwidge, however, seeing his danger, fired a gun, which had the desired effect of frightening the beast; and the boy then returned, somewhat afraid of the consequences of his trespass. The Captain reprimanded him sternly for conduct so unworthy of the office which he filled, and desired to know what motive he could have for hunting a bear. 'Sir,' said he, pouting his lip, as he was wont to do when agitated, 'I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry the skin to my father.'

A party were now sent to an island, about twelve miles off (named Walden's Island in the charts, from the Midshipman who was entrusted with this service), to see where the open water lay. They came back with information, that the ice, though close all about them, was open to the westward, round the point by which they came in. They said also, that upon the island they had had a fresh east wind. This intelligence considerably abated the hopes of the crew: for where they lay it had been almost calm, and their main dependence had been upon the effect of an easterly wind in clearing the bay. There was but one alternative; either to wait the event of the weather upon the ships, or to betake themselves to the boats. The likelihood that it might be necessary to sacrifice the ships had been foreseen; the boats, accordingly, were adapted, both in number and size, to transport, in case of emergency, the whole crew; and there were Dutch whalers upon the coast, in which they could all be conveyed to Europe. As for wintering where they were, that dreadful experiment had been already tried too often. No time was to be lost; the ships had driven into shoal

water, having but fourteen fathoms. Should they, or the ice to which they were fast, take the ground, they must inevitably be lost; and at this time they were driving fast toward some rocks on the N.E. Captain Phipps sent for the officers of both ships, and told them his intention of preparing the boats for going away. They were immediately hoisted out, and the fitting begun. Canvas bread-bags were made, in case it should be necessary suddenly to desert the vessels; and men were sent with the lead and line to the northward and eastward, to sound wherever they found cracks in the ice, that they might have notice before the ice took the ground; for, in that case, the ships must instantly have been crushed or overset.

On the 7th of August they began to haul the boats over the ice, Nelson having command of a four-oared cutter. The men behaved excellently well, like true British seamen: they seemed reconciled to the thought of leaving the ships, and had full confidence in their officers. About noon, the ice appeared rather more open near the vessels; and as the wind was easterly, though there was but little of it, the sails were set, and they got about a mile to the westward. They moved very slowly, and were not now nearly so far to the westward as when they were first beset. However, all sail was kept upon them, to force them through whenever the ice slacked the least. Whatever exertions were made, it could not be possible to get the boats to the water's edge before the 14th; and if the situation of the ships should not alter by that time, it would not be justifiable to stay longer by them. The commander therefore resolved to carry on both attempts together, moving the boats constantly, and taking every opportunity of getting the ships through. A party was sent out next day to the westward, to examine the state of the ice: they returned with tidings that it was very heavy and close, consisting chiefly of large fields. The ships, however, moved something, and the ice itself was drifting westward. There was a thick fog,

so that it was impossible to ascertain what advantage had been gained. It continued on the 9th; but the ships were moved a little through some very small openings; the mist cleared off in the afternoon; and it was then perceived that they had driven much more than could have been expected to the westward, and that the ice itself had driven still farther. In the course of the day they got past the boats, and took them on board again. On the morrow the wind sprang up from the N.N.E. All sail was set, and the ships forced their way through a great deal of very heavy ice. They frequently struck, and with such force, that one stroke broke the shank of the *Racehorse's* best bower-anchor; but the vessels made way, and by noon they had cleared the ice, and were out at sea. The next day they anchored in Smeerenberg Harbour, close to that island of which the westernmost point is called Hakluyt's Headland, in honour of the great promoter and compiler of our English voyages of discovery.

Here they remained a few days, that the men might rest after their fatigue. The season was now so far advanced, that nothing more could have been attempted, if indeed anything had been left untried; but the summer had been unusually favourable, and they had carefully surveyed the wall of ice, extending for more than twenty degrees between the latitudes of 80° and 81°, without the smallest appearance of any opening.

The ships were paid off shortly after their return to England; and Nelson was then placed by his uncle with Captain Farmer, in the *Seahorse*, of 20 guns, then going out to the East Indies in the squadron under Sir Edward Hughes. He was stationed in the foretop at watch and watch. His good conduct attracted the attention of the Master (afterwards Captain Surridge), in whose watch he was; and, upon his recommendation, the Captain rated him as Midshipman. At this time his countenance was florid, and his appearance rather stout and athletic; but, when he had been about eighteen months in India, he felt

the effects of that climate, so perilous to European constitutions. The disease baffled all power of medicine; he was reduced almost to a skeleton; the use of his limbs was for some time entirely lost; and the only hope that remained, was from a voyage home. Accordingly he was brought home by Captain Pigot, in the *Dolphin*; and had it not been for the attentive and careful kindness of that officer on the way, Nelson would never have lived to reach his native shores. He had formed an acquaintance with Sir Charles Pole, Sir Thomas Troubridge, and other distinguished officers, then, like himself, beginning their career: he had left them pursuing that career in full enjoyment of health and hope, and was returning from a country, in which all things were to him new and interesting, with a body broken down by sickness, and spirits which had sunk with his strength. Long afterwards, when the name of Nelson was known as widely as that of England itself, he spoke of the feelings which he at this time endured. 'I felt impressed,' said he, 'with a feeling that I should never rise in my profession. My mind was staggered with a view of the difficulties I had to surmount, and the little interest I possessed. I could discover no means of reaching the object of my ambition. After a long and gloomy reverie, in which I almost wished myself overboard, a sudden glow of patriotism was kindled within me, and presented my King and country as my patron. Well, then,' I exclaimed, 'I will be a hero! and, confiding in Providence, I will brave every danger!'

His interest, however, was far better than he imagined. During his absence, Captain Suckling had been made Comptroller of the navy; his health had materially improved upon the voyage; and, as soon as the *Dolphin* was paid off, he was appointed Acting-Lieutenant in the *Worcester*, 64 guns, Captain Mark Robinson, then going out with convoy to Gibraltar. Soon after his return, on the 8th of April, 1777, he passed his examination for a lieutenancy. Captain Suckling sat at the head of the board; and, when the examination had ended, in a manner

highly honourable to Nelson, rose from his seat, and introduced him to the examining Captains as his nephew. They expressed their wonder that he had not informed them of this relationship before; he replied, that he did not wish the younker to be favoured; he knew his nephew would pass a good examination, and he had not been deceived. The next day Nelson received his commission as Second Lieutenant of the *Lowestoffe* frigate, Captain William Locker, then fitting out for Jamaica.

American, and French privateers under American colours, were at that time harassing our trade in the West Indies: even a frigate was not sufficiently active for Nelson, and he repeatedly got appointed to the command of one of the *Lowestoffe's* tenders. During one of their cruises the *Lowestoffe* captured an American letter-of-marque: it was blowing a gale, and a heavy sea running. The First Lieutenant being ordered to board the prize, went below to put on his hanger. It happened to be mislaid; and, while he was seeking it, Captain Locker came on deck. Perceiving the boat still alongside, and in danger every moment of being swamped, and being extremely anxious that the privateer should be instantly taken in charge, because he feared that it would otherwise founder, he exclaimed, 'Have I no officer in the ship who can board the prize?' Nelson did not offer himself immediately, waiting, with his usual sense of propriety, for the First Lieutenant's return; but, hearing the Master volunteer, he jumped into the boat, saying, 'It is my turn now; and if I come back, it is yours.' The American, who had carried a heavy press of sail, in hope of escaping, was so completely water-logged that the *Lowestoffe's* boat went in on deck, and out again with the sea.

Nelson was fortunate in possessing good interest at the time when it could be most serviceable to him. His promotion had been almost as rapid as it could be; and before he had attained the age of twenty-one he had gained that rank which brought all the honours of the service within his reach. No opportunity, indeed, had

yet been given him of distinguishing himself; but he was thoroughly master of his profession, and his zeal and ability were acknowledged wherever he was known. Count D'Estaing, with a fleet of one hundred and twenty-five sail, men-of-war and transports, and a reputed force of five-and-twenty thousand men, threatened Jamaica from St. Domingo. Nelson offered his services to the Admiral and to Governor-General Dalling, and was appointed to command the batteries of Fort Charles, at Port Royal. Not more than seven thousand men could be mustered for the defence of the island,—a number wholly inadequate to resist the force which threatened them. Of this Nelson was so well aware, that when he wrote to his friends in England, he told them they must not be surprised to hear of his learning to speak French. D'Estaing, however, was either not aware of his own superiority, or not equal to the command with which he was entrusted; he attempted nothing with his formidable armament; and General Dalling was thus left to execute a project which he had formed against the Spanish colonies.

This project was, to take Fort San Juan, on the river of that name, which flows from Lake Nicaragua into the Atlantic; make himself master of the lake itself, and of the cities of Granada and Leon; and thus cut off the communication of the Spaniards between their northern and southern possessions in America. General Dalling's plans were well formed; but the history and the nature of the country had not been studied as accurately as its geography: the difficulties which occurred in fitting out the expedition delayed it till the season was too far advanced; and the men were thus sent to adventure themselves, not so much against an enemy, whom they would have beaten, as against a climate, which would do the enemy's work.

Early in the year 1780 (February 3rd), five hundred men destined for this service were convoyed by Nelson from Port Royal to Cape Gracias a Dios, in Honduras. Not a native was to be seen when they landed, February

14th: they had been taught that the English came with no other intent than that of enslaving them, and sending them to Jamaica. After a while, however, one of them ventured down, confiding in his knowledge of one of the party; and by his means the neighbouring tribes were conciliated with presents, and brought in. The troops were encamped on a swampy and unwholesome plain, where they were joined by a party of the seventy-ninth regiment, from Black River, who were already in a deplorable state of sickness. Having remained here a month they proceeded, anchoring frequently along the Mosquito shore, to collect their Indian allies, who were to furnish proper boats for the river, and to accompany them. They reached the river San Juan March 24th, and here, according to his orders, Nelson's services were to terminate; but not a man in the expedition had ever been up the river, or knew the distance of any fortification from its mouth: and he, not being one who would turn back when so much was to be done, resolved to carry the soldiers up. About two hundred, therefore, were embarked in the Mosquito shore craft, and in two of the *Hinchinbrook's* boats, and they began their voyage.

On the 9th of April they reached an island in the river, called San Bartolomeo, which the Spaniards had fortified, as an outpost, with a small semicircular battery, mounting nine or ten swivels, and manned with sixteen or eighteen men. It commanded the river in a rapid and difficult part of the navigation. Nelson, at the head of a few of his seamen, leaped upon the beach. The ground upon which he sprung was so muddy, that he had some difficulty in extricating himself, and lost his shoes: barefooted, however, he advanced, and, in his own phrase, *boarded the battery*. The castle of San Juan is situated about sixteen miles higher up: the stores and ammunition, however, were landed a few miles below the castle, and the men had to march through woods almost impassable. One of the men was bitten under the eye by a snake, which darted upon him from the bough of a tree. He was un-

able to proceed from the violence of the pain: and when, after a short while, some of his comrades were sent back to assist him, he was dead, and the body already putrid. Nelson himself narrowly escaped a similar fate. He had ordered his hammock to be slung under some trees, being excessively fatigued, and was sleeping, when a monitory lizard passed across his face. The Indians happily observed the reptile, and, knowing what it indicated, awoke him. He started up, and found one of the deadliest serpents of the country coiled up at his feet. He suffered from poison of another kind; for, drinking at a spring in which some boughs of the manchineel[1] had been thrown, the effects were so severe, as, in the opinion of some of his friends, to inflict a lasting injury upon his constitution.

The castle of San Juan is thirty-two miles below the point where the river issues from the Lake of Nicaragua, and sixty-nine from its mouth. Boats reach the sea from thence in a day and a half; but their navigation back, even when unladen, is the labour of nine days. The English appeared before it on the 11th, two days after they had taken San Bartolomeo. Nelson's advice was, that it should instantly be carried by assault; but Nelson was not the commander, and it was thought proper to observe all the formalities of a siege. Ten days were wasted before this could be commenced. It was a work more of fatigue than of danger; but fatigue was more to be dreaded than the enemy. The rains set in, and, could the garrison have held out a little longer, diseases would have rid them of their invaders. Even the Indians sunk under it, the victims of unusual exertion, and of their own excesses. The place surrendered on the 24th. But victory procured to the conquerors none of that relief which had been expected; the castle was worse than a prison; and it contained nothing which could contribute to the recovery of the sick, or the preservation of those

Manchineel: a poisonous plant.

who were yet unaffected. Five months the English persisted in what may be called this war against nature; they then left a few men, who seemed proof against the climate, to retain the castle till the Spaniards should choose to retake it, and make them prisoners. The rest abandoned their baleful conquest. Eighteen hundred men were sent to different posts upon this wretched expedition; not more than three hundred and eighty ever returned. The *Hinchinbrook's* complement consisted of two hundred men; eighty-seven took to their beds in one night, and of the whole crew not more than ten survived.

The transports' men all died, and some of the ships, having none left to take care of them, sunk in the harbour; but transport ships were not wanted, for the troops which they had brought were no more; they had fallen, not by the hand of an enemy, but by the deadly influence of the climate.

Nelson himself was saved by a timely removal. In a few days after the commencement of the siege he was seized with the prevailing dysentery; meantime Captain Glover died, and Nelson was appointed to succeed him in the *Janus* of 44 guns; Collingwood being then made Post into the *Hinchinbrook*. He returned to the harbour the day before San Juan surrendered, and immediately sailed for Jamaica in the sloop which brought the news of his appointment. He was, however, so greatly reduced by the disorder, that when they reached Port Royal he was carried ashore in his cot; and finding himself, after a partial amendment, unable to retain the command of his new ship, he was compelled to ask leave to return to England, as the only means of recovery. Captain (afterwards Admiral) Cornwallis took him home in the *Lion*; and to his care and kindness Nelson believed himself indebted for his life. He went immediately to Bath, in a miserable state; so helpless, that he was carried to and from his bed; and the act of moving him produced the most violent pain. In three months he recovered, and immediately hastened to London, and applied for em-

ployment. After an interval of about four months he was appointed (August 16th) to the *Albemarle*, of 28 guns, a French merchantman, which had been purchased from the captors for the King's service.

His health was not yet thoroughly re-established; and while he was employed in getting his ship ready, he again became so ill as hardly to be able to keep out of bed. Yet n this state, still suffering from the fatal effect of a West Indian climate, as if, it might almost be supposed, he said, to try his constitution, he was sent to the North Seas, and kept there the whole winter. The asperity with which he mentioned this so many years afterwards, evinces how deeply he resented a mode of conduct equally cruel to the individual and detrimental to the service. When they anchored off Elsineur (November 4th), the Danish Admiral sent on board, desiring to be informed what ships had arrived, and to have their force written down. 'The *Albemarle*,' said Nelson to the messenger, 'is one of his Britannic Majesty's ships; you are at liberty, sir, to count the guns as you go down the side, and you may assure the Danish Admiral that, if necessary, they shall all be well served.' During this voyage he gained a considerable knowledge of the Danish coast, and its soundings; greatly to the advantage of his country in after times.

Nelson was now ordered to Quebec. Accordingly he sailed to Canada (April 26th). His ship, the *Albemarle*, was under orders to convoy a fleet of transports to New York. 'A very pretty job,' said her captain, 'at this late season of the year' (October was far advanced), 'for our sails are at this moment frozen to the yards.' On his arrival at Sandy Hook, he waited on the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Digby, who told him he was come on a fine station for making prize-money. 'Yes, sir,' Nelson made answer; 'but the West Indies is the station for honour.' Lord Hood, with a detachment of Rodney's victorious fleet, was at that time at Sandy Hook: he had been intimate with Captain Suckling; and Nelson, who was desirous of nothing but honour, requested him to ask

for the *Albemarle*, that he might go to that station where it was most likely to be obtained. Admiral Digby reluctantly parted with him. His professional merit was already well known: and Lord Hood, on introducing him to Prince William Henry,[1] as the Duke of Clarence was then called, told the prince if he wished to ask any questions respecting naval tactics, Captain Nelson could give him as much information as any officer in the fleet. The Duke, who, to his own honour, became from that time the firm friend of Nelson, describes him as appearing the merest boy of a Captain he had ever seen, dressed in a full-laced uniform, an old-fashioned waistcoat with long flaps, and his lank unpowdered hair tied in a stiff Hessian tail of extraordinary length; making, altogether, 'so remarkable a figure, that,' says the Duke, 'I had never seen anything like it before, nor could I imagine who he was, nor what he came about. But his address and conversation were irresistibly pleasing; and when he spoke on professional subjects, it was with an enthusiasm that showed he was no common being.'

Tidings soon arrived that the preliminaries of peace had been signed (June 25th, 1783); and the *Albemarle* returned to England, and was paid off (July 3rd). Nelson's first business, after he got to London, even before he went to see his relations, was to attempt to get the wages due to his men for the various ships in which they had served during the war. 'The disgust of seamen to the navy,' he said, 'was all owing to the infernal plan of turning them over from ship to ship; so that men could not be attached to the officers, nor the officers care the least about the men.' Yet he himself was so beloved by his men, that his whole ship's company offered, if he could get a ship, to enter for her immediately. He was now, for the first time, presented at Court.

[1] Then a midshipman in the Navy; afterwards William IV.

CHAPTER II

'I HAVE closed the war,' said Nelson, in one of his letters, 'without a fortune; but there is not a speck in my character. True honour, I hope, predominates in my mind far above riches.' He did not apply for a ship, because he was not wealthy enough to live on board in the manner which was then become customary. Finding it, therefore, prudent to economize on his half-pay during the peace, he went to France, in company with Captain Macnamara, of the navy, and took lodgings at St. Omer's.

In March he was appointed to the *Boreas*, 28 guns, going to the Leeward Islands, as a cruiser on the peace establishment. Lady Hughes and her family went out with him to Admiral Sir Richard Hughes, who commanded on that station. His ship was full of young Midshipmen, of whom there were not less than thirty on board: and happy were they whose lot it was to be placed with such a Captain. If he perceived that a boy was afraid at first going aloft, he would say to him, in a friendly manner, 'Well, sir, I am going a race to the mast-head, and beg that I may meet you there.' The poor litle fellow instantly began to climb, and got up how he could, Nelson never noticed in what manner; but, when they met in the top, spoke cheerfully to him, and would say, how much any person was to be pitied who fancied that getting up was e ther dangerous or difficult. Every day he went into the school-room, to see that they were pursuing their nautical studies; and at noon he was always the first on deck with his quadrant. Whenever he paid a visit of ceremony,

some of these youths accompanied him; and when he went to dine with the Governor at Barbadoes, he took one of them in his hand, and presented him, saying, 'Your Excellency must excuse me for bringing one of my Midshipmen. I make it a rule to introduce them to all the good company I can, as they have few to look up to, besides myself, during the time they are at sea.'

The Americans were at this time trading with our islands, taking advantage of the register of their ships, which had been issued while they were British subjects. Nelson knew that, by the Navigation Act, no foreigners, directly or indirectly, are permitted to carry on any trade with these possessions: he knew, also, that the Americans had made themselves foreigners with regard to England; they had disregarded the ties of blood and language, when they acquired their independence; and he was resolved that they should derive no profit from those ties now. Foreigners they had made themselves, and as foreigners they were to be treated. 'If once,' said he, 'they are admitted to any kind of intercourse with our islands, the views of the loyalists, in settling at Nova Scotia, are entirely done away; and when we are again embroiled in a French war, the Americans will first become the carriers of these colonies, and then have possession of them.' In November, when the squadron, having arrived at Barbadoes, was to separate, with no other orders than those for examining anchorages, and the usual inquiries concerning wood and water, Nelson asked his friend Collingwood, then Captain of the *Mediator*, whose opinions he knew upon the subject, to accompany him to the Commander-in-Chief, whom he then respectfully asked, whether they were not to attend to the commerce of the country, and see that the Navigation Act was respected—that appearing to him to be the intent of keeping men-of-war upon this station in time of peace? Sir Richard Hughes replied, he had no particular orders, neither had the Admiralty sent him any acts of parliament. But Nelson made answer, that the Navigation Act was included in the statutes of the Admiralty,

with which every Captain was furnished, and that act was directed to Admirals, Captains, &c., to see it carried into execution. Sir Richard said he had never seen the book. Upon this Nelson produced the statutes, read the words of the Act, and apparently convinced the Commander-in-Chief, that men-of-war, as he said, 'were sent abroad for some other purpose than to be made a show of.' Accordingly orders were given to enforce the Navigation Act.

Major-General Sir Thomas Shirley was at this time Governor of the Leeward Islands; and when Nelson waited on him, to inform him how he intended to act, and upon what grounds, he replied, that 'old Generals were not in the habit of taking advice from young gentlemen.' 'Sir,' said the young officer, with that confidence in himself which never carried him too far, and always was equal to the occasion, 'I am as old as the Prime Minister of England, and think myself as capable of commanding one of his Majesty's ships as that minister is of governing the State.' He was resolved to do his duty, whatever might be the opinion or conduct of others: and when he arrived upon his station at St. Kitt's, he sent away all the Americans, not choosing to seize them before they had been well apprised that the Act would be carried into effect, lest it might seem as if a trap had been laid for them. The Americans, though they prudently decamped from St. Kitt's, were emboldened by the support they met with, and resolved to resist his orders, alleging that king's ships had no legal power to seize them without having deputations from the Customs. The planters were to a man against him; the Governors and the Presidents of the different islands, with only a single exception, gave him no support: and the Admiral, afraid to act on either side, yet wishing to oblige the planters, sent him a note, advising him to be guided by the wishes of the President of the Council. There was no danger in disregarding this, as it came unofficially, and in the form of advice. But scarcely a month after he had shown Sir Richard

Hughes the law, and, as he supposed, satisfied him concerning it, he received an order from him, stating that he had now obtained good advice upon the point, and the Americans were not to be hindered from coming, and having free egress and regress, if the Governor chose to permit them. An order to the same purport had been sent round to the different Governors and Presidents; and General Shirley and others informed him, in an authoritative manner, that they chose to admit American ships, as the Commander-in-Chief had left the decision to them. These persons, in his own words, he soon 'trimmed up, and silenced;' but it was a more delicate business to deal with the Admiral. 'I must either,' said he, 'disobey my orders, or disobey acts of parliament. I determined upon the former, trusting to the uprightness of my intentions, and believing that my country would not let me be ruined for protecting her commerce.' With this determination he wrote to Sir Richard; appealed again to the plain, literal, unequivocal sense of the Navigation Act; and in respectful language told him he felt it his duty to decline obeying these orders till he had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with him. Sir Richard's first feeling was that of anger, and he was about to supersede Nelson; but having mentioned the affair to his Captain, that officer told him he believed all the squadron thought the orders illegal, and therefore did not know how far they were bound to obey them. It was impossible, therefore, to bring Nelson to a court-martial, composed of men who agreed with him in opinion upon the point in dispute; and luckily, though the Admiral wanted vigour of mind to decide upon what was right, he was not obstinate in wrong, and had even generosity enough in his nature to thank Nelson afterwards for having shown him his error.

Collingwood, in the *Mediator*, and his brother, Wilfred Collingwood, in the *Rattler*, actively co-operated with Nelson. The custom-houses were informed, that after a certain day all foreign vessels found in the ports would be seized; and many were in consequence seized, and

condemned in the Admiralty Court. During the progress of this business he sent a memorial home to the King; and upon the representations which he made at the same time to the Secretary of State, and the suggestions with which he accompanied it, the Register Act was framed. The sanction of Government, and the approbation of his conduct which it implied, were highly gratifying to him: but he was offended, and not without just cause, that the Treasury should have transmitted thanks to the Commander-in-Chief, for his activity and zeal in protecting the commerce of Great Britain. 'Had they known all,' said he, 'I do not think they would have bestowed thanks in that quarter, and neglected me. I feel much hurt that, after the loss of health and risk of fortune, another should be thanked for what I did against his orders. I either deserve to be sent out of the service, or at least to have had some little notice taken of what I had done. They have thought it worthy of notice, and yet have neglected me. If this is the reward for a faithful discharge of my duty, I shall be careful, and never stand forward again. But I have done my duty, and have nothing to accuse myself of.'

He was, at this time, wooing the niece of his friend the President, then in her eighteenth year, the widow of Dr. Nisbet, a physician. She had one child, a son, by name Josiah, who was three years old. One day, Mr. Herbert, who had hastened, half-dressed, to receive Nelson, exclaimed, on returning to his dressing-room, 'Good God! if I did not find that great little man, of whom everybody is so afraid, playing in the next room, under the dining-table, with Mrs. Nisbet's child!' A few days afterwards Mrs. Nisbet herself was first introduced to him, and thanked him for the partiality which he had shown to her little boy. Her manners were mild and winning; and the Captain, whose heart was easily susceptible of attachment, found no such imperious necessity for subduing his inclinations as had twice before withheld him from marrying. They were married on March 11, 1787: Prince

William Henry, who had come out to the West Indies the preceding winter, being present, by his own desire, to give away the bride.

During the three years that the *Boreas* had remained upon a station which is usually so fatal, not a single officer or man of her whole complement had died. This almost unexampled instance of good health, though mostly, no doubt, imputable to a healthy season, must, in some measure, also be ascribed to the wise conduct of the Captain. He never suffered the ships to remain more than three or four weeks at a time at any of the islands; and when the hurricane months confined him to English Harbour, he encouraged all kinds of useful amusements; music, dancing, and cudgelling among the men; theatricals among the officers; anything which could employ their attention, and keep their spirits cheerful. The *Boreas* arrived in England in June.

[Nelson spent some time with Mrs. Nelson at his father's parsonage. During this time he twice applied for service, but no appointment was given to him.]

CHAPTER III

On the 30th January, 1793, Nelson was appointed to the *Agamemnon*, of 64 guns.

'There are three things, young gentleman,' said Nelson to one of his Midshipmen, 'which you are constantly to bear in mind. First, you must always implicitly obey orders, without attempting to form any opinion of your own respecting their propriety. Secondly, you must consider every man your enemy who speaks ill of your king; and, thirdly, you must hate a Frenchman as you do the devil.' With these feelings he engaged in the war. Josiah, his stepson, went with him as a Midshipman.

The *Agamemnon* was ordered to the Mediterranean, under Lord Hood. The fleet arrived in those seas at a time when the South of France would willingly have formed itself into a separate republic, under the protection of England. But good principles had been at that time perilously abused by ignorant and profligate men; and in its fear and hatred of democracy the English Government abhorred whatever was republican. Lord Hood could not take advantage of the fair occasion which presented itself; and which, if it had been seized with vigour, might have ended in dividing France; but he negotiated with the people of Toulon, to take possession provisionally of their port and city; which, fatally for themselves, was done. Before the British fleet entered, Nelson was sent with despatches to Sir William Hamilton, our envoy at the Court of Naples. Sir William, after his first interview with him, told Lady Hamilton he was about to introduce

a little man to her, who could not boast of being very handsome; but such a man as he believed would one day astonish the world. 'I have never before,' he continued, 'entertained an officer at my house; but I am determined to bring him here. Let him be put in the room prepared for Prince Augustus.' He spoke of Lady Hamilton, in a letter to his wife, as a young woman of amiable manners, who did honour to the station to which she had been raised; and he remarked, that she had been exceedingly kind to Josiah. The activity with which the Envoy exerted himself in procuring troops from Naples to assist in garrisoning Toulon, so delighted him, that he is said to have exclaimed, 'Sir William, you are a man after my own heart; you do business in my own way;' and then to have added, 'I am now only a Captain; but I will, if I live, be at the top of the tree.'

Nelson found Commodore Linzee at Tunis, where he had been sent to expostulate with the Dey upon the impolicy of his supporting the revolutionary government of France. Nelson represented to him the atrocity of that government. Such arguments were of little avail in Barbary; and when the Bey was told that the French had put their sovereign to death, he drily replied, that 'Nothing could be more heinous; and yet, if historians told the truth, the English had once done the same.' This answer had doubtless been suggested by the French about him: they had completely gained the ascendancy, and all negotiation on our part proved fruitless.

The *Agamemnon* was now dispatched to co-operate at the siege of Calvi with General Sir Charles Stuart; an officer who, unfortunately for his country, never had an adequate field allotted him for the display of those eminent talents, which were, to all who knew him, so conspicuous. Nelson was acting with a man after his own heart, who was never sparing of himself, and slept every night in the advanced battery. 'We will fag ourselves to death,' said he to Lord Hood, 'before any blame shall lie at our

doors. I trust it will not be forgotten, that twenty-five pieces of heavy ordnance have been dragged to the different batteries, mounted, and all but three fought by seamen, except one artilleryman to point the guns.' The climate proved more destructive than the service; for this was during the lion sun, as they there call our season of the dog-days. Of two thousand men, about half were sick, and the rest like so many phantoms. Nelson described himself as the reed among the oaks, bowing before the storm when they were laid low by it. 'All the prevailing disorders have attacked me,' said he, 'but I have not strength enough for them to fasten on.' The loss from the enemy was not great; but Nelson received a serious injury: a shot struck the ground near him, and drove the sand and small gravel into one of his eyes. He spoke of it slightly at the time; writing the same day to Lord Hood, he only said, that he got a little hurt that morning, not much; and the next day, he said, he should be able to attend his duty in the evening. In fact, he suffered it to confine him only one day; but the sight was lost.

Corsica was now loudly threatened. The French, who had not yet been taught to feel their own inferiority upon the seas, braved us in contempt upon that element. They had a superior fleet in the Mediterranean, and they sent it out with express orders to seek the English and engage them. Accordingly the Toulon fleet, consisting of seventeen ships of the line, and five smaller vessels, put to sea. Admiral Hotham received this information at Leghorn, and sailed immediately in search of them. He had with him fourteen sail of the line, and one Neapolitan seventy-four; but his ships were only half manned, containing but seven thousand six hundred and fifty men, whereas the enemy had sixteen thousand nine hundred. He soon came in sight of them. A general action was expected, and Nelson, as was his custom on such occasions, wrote a hasty letter to his wife, as that which might possibly contain his last farewell. 'The lives of all,' said he 'are in the hand of Him who knows best whether to preserve

mine or not; my character and good name are in my own keeping.'

But however confident the French government might be of their naval superiority, the officers had no such feeling; and after manœuvring for a day (March 13th, 1795) in sight of the English fleet, they suffered themselves to be chased. One of their ships, the *Ca Ira*, of eighty-four guns, carried away her main and fore top-masts. The *Inconstant* frigate fired at the disabled ship, but received so many shot that she was obliged to leave her. Soon afterwards a French frigate took the *Ca Ira* in tow; and the *Sans-Culottes*, 120 guns, and the *Jean Barras*, 74 guns, kept about gunshot distance on her weather-bow. The *Agamemnon* stood towards her, having no ship of the line to support her within several miles. As she drew near, the *Ca Ira* fired her stern guns so truly that not a shot missed some part of the ship; and latterly the masts were struck by every shot. It had been Nelson's intention not to fire before he touched her stern; but seeing how impossible it was that he should be supported, and how certainly the *Agamemnon* must be severely cut up, if her masts were disabled, he altered his plan according to the occasion. As soon, therefore, as he was within a hundred yards of her stern, he ordered the helm to be put a-starboard, and the driver and after-sails to be brailed up and shivered; and, as the ship fell off, gave the enemy her whole broadside. They instantly braced up the after-yards, put the helm a-port, and stood after her again. This manœuvre he practised for two hours and a quarter, never allowing the *Ca Ira* to get a single gun from either side to bear on him; and when the French fired their after guns now, it was no longer with coolness and precision; for every shot went far ahead. By this time her sails were hanging in tatters, her mizen-topmast, mizen-topsail, and cross-jack-yards, shot away. But the frigate which had her in tow hove in stays, and got her round. Both these French ships now brought their guns to bear, and opened their fire. The *Agamemnon* passed them within

half pistol-shot; almost every shot passed over her; for the French had elevated their guns for the rigging, and for distant firing, and did not think of altering the elevation. As soon as the *Agamemnon's* after-guns ceased to bear, she hove in stays, keeping a constant fire as she came round, and being worked, said Nelson, with as much exactness as if she had been turning into Spithead. On getting round, he saw that the *Sans-Culottes*, which had wore, with many of the enemy's ships, was under his lee bow, and standing to leeward. The Admiral at the same time made the signal for the van ships to join him. Upon this Nelson bore away, and prepared to set all sail; and the enemy, having saved their ship, hauled close to the wind, and opened upon him a distant and ineffectual fire. Only seven of the *Agamemnon's* men were hurt, a thing which Nelson himself remarked as wonderful; her sails and rigging were very much cut, and she had many shots in her hull, and some between wind and water. The *Ca Ira* lost one hundred and ten men that day, and was so cut up, that she could not get a topmast aloft during the night.

At daylight on the following morning (March 14th) the English ships were taken aback with a fine breeze at N.W., while the enemy's fleet kept the southerly wind. The body of their fleet was about five miles distant; the *Ca Ira*, and the *Censeur*, 74 guns, which had her in tow, about three and a half. All sail was made to cut these ships off; and as the French attempted to save them, a partial action was brought on. The *Agamemnon* was again engaged with her yesterday's antagonist; but she had to fight on both sides the ship at the same time. The *Ca Ira* and the *Censeur* fought most gallantly: the first lost nearly three hundred men, in addition to her former loss; the last, three hundred and fifty. Both at length struck; and Lieutenant Andrews, of the *Agamemnon*, and, in Nelson's own words, 'as gallant an officer as ever stepped a quarter-deck,' hoisted English colours on board them both. The rest of the enemy's ships behaved very ill. As soon as

these vessels had struck, Nelson went to Admiral Hotham, and proposed that the two prizes should be left with the *Illustrious* and *Courageux*, which had been crippled in the action, and with four frigates, and that the rest of the fleet should pursue the enemy, and follow up the advantage to the utmost. But his reply was, 'We must be contented; we have done very well,' 'Now,' said Nelson, 'had we taken ten sail, and allowed the eleventh to escape, when it had been possible to have got at her, I could never have called it well done. Goodall backed me: I got him to write to the Admiral; but it would not do. We should have had such a day as, I believe, the annals of England never produced.' In this letter, the character of Nelson fully manifests itself. 'I wish,' said he, 'to be an Admiral, and in the command of the English fleet: I should very soon either do much, or be ruined; my disposition cannot bear tame and slow measures. Sure I am, had I commanded on the 14th, that either the whole French fleet would have graced my triumph, or I should have been in a confounded scrape.' What the event would have been, he knew from his prophetic feelings and his own consciousness of power; and we also know it now, for Aboukir and Trafalgar have told it.

Admiral Hotham's action saved Corsica for the time; but the victory had been incomplete, and the arrival at Toulon of six sail of the line, two frigates, and two cutters from Brest, gave the French a superiority which, had they known how to use it, would materially have endangered the British Mediterranean fleet. That fleet had been greatly neglected at the Admiralty during Lord Chatham's administration; and it did not, for some time, feel the beneficial effect of his removal. Lord Hood had gone home to represent the real state of affairs, and solicit reinforcements adequate to the exigencies of the time, and the importance of the scene of action. But that fatal error of under-proportioning the force to the service; that ruinous economy, which, by sparing a little, renders all that is spent useless, infected the British councils;

and Lord Hood, not being able to obtain such reinforcements as he knew were necessary, resigned the command. At length Admiral Man arrived with a squadron from England. 'What they can mean by sending him with only five sail of the line,' said Nelson, 'is truly astonishing; but all men are alike, and we in this country do not find any amendment or alteration from the old Board of Admiralty. They should know that half the ships in the fleet require to go to England; and that long ago they ought to have reinforced us.'

CHAPTER IV

SIR JOHN JERVIS had now (Nov. 30th) arrived to take the command of the Mediterranean fleet. The *Agamemnon* having, as her Captain said, been made as fit for sea as a rotten ship could be, Nelson sailed from Leghorn, and joined the Admiral in Fiorenzo Bay. (Jan. 19th, 1796.) 'I found him,' said he, 'anxious to know many things, which I was a good deal surprised to find had not been communicated to him by others in the fleet; and it would appear that he was so well satisfied with my opinion of what is likely to happen, and the means of prevention to be taken, that he had no reserve with me respecting his information and ideas of what is likely to be done.' The manner in which Nelson was received is said to have excited some envy. One Captain observed to him: 'You did just as you pleased in Lord Hood's time, the same in Admiral Hotham's, and now again with Sir John Jervis: it makes no difference to you who is Commander-in-Chief.' A higher compliment could not have been paid to any Commander-in-Chief, than to say of him, that he understood the merits of Nelson, and left him, as far as possible, to act upon his own judgment.

Sir John Jervis offered him the *St. George*, 90 guns, or the *Zealous*, 74 guns, and asked if he should have any objection to serve under him with his flag. He replied, that if the *Agamemnon* were ordered home, and his flag were not arrived, he should, on many accounts, wish to return to England; still, if the war continued, he should be very proud of hoisting his flag under Sir John's com-

mand. 'We cannot spare you,' said Sir John, 'either as Captain or Admiral.' Accordingly, he resumed his station in the Gulf of Genoa. The French had not followed up their successes in that quarter with their usual celerity. Schérer, who commanded there, owed his advancement to any other cause than his merit: he was removed from a command for which his incapacity was afterwards clearly proved, and Buonaparte was appointed to succeed him. Buonaparte had given indications of his military talents at Toulon, and of his remorseless nature at Paris; but the extent either of his ability or his wickedness was at this time known to none, and, perhaps, not even suspected by himself.

Nelson supposed, from the information which he had obtained, that one column of the French army would take possession of Port Especia; either penetrating through the Genoese territory, or proceeding coastways in light vessels; our ships of war not being able to approach the coast, because of the shallowness of the water. To prevent this, he said, two things were necessary, the possession of Vado Bay, and the taking of Port Especia. If either of these points were secured, Italy would be safe from any attack of the French by sea. General Beaulieu, who had now superseded De Vins in the command of the allied Austrian and Sardinian army, sent his nephew and aide-de-camp to communicate with Nelson, and inquire whether he could anchor in any other place than Vado Bay. Nelson replied, that Vado was the only place where the British fleet could lie in safety; but all places would suit his squadron, and wherever the General came down to the sea-coast, there he should find it. The Austrian repeatedly asked if there was not a risk of losing the squadron, and was constantly answered, that if these ships should be lost the Admiral would find others. But all plans of co-operation with the Austrians were soon frustrated by the battle of Montenotte. Buonaparte, with a celerity which had never before been witnessed in modern war, pursued his advantages; and in the course

of a fortnight dictated to the Court of Turin terms of peace, or rather of submission; by which all the strongest places of Piedmont were put into his hands.

On one occasion, and only on one, Nelson was able to impede the progress of this new conqueror. Six vessels, laden with cannon and ordnance stores for the siege of Mantua, sailed from Toulon for St. Pier d'Arena. Assisted by Captain Cockburn, in the *Meleager*, he drove them under a battery, pursued them, silenced the batteries, and captured the whole (May 30th). Military books, plans, and maps of Italy, with the different points marked upon them where former battles had been fought, sent by the Directory for Buonaparte's use, were found in the convoy. The loss of this artillery was one of the chief causes which compelled the French to raise the siege of Mantua; but there was too much treachery, and too much imbecility, both in the councils and armies of the allied powers, for Austria to improve this momentary success. Buonaparte perceived that the conquest of all Italy was within his reach. Treaties, and the rights of neutral or of friendly powers, were as little regarded by him as by the government for which he acted; in open contempt of both he entered Tuscany, and took possession of Leghorn. In consequence of this movement, Nelson blockaded that port (July 6th), and landed a British force in the Isle of Elba, to secure Porto Ferrajo. Soon afterwards he took the island of Capraja (July 10th), which had formerly belonged to Corsica, being less than forty miles distant from it; a distance, however, short as it was, which enabled the Genoese to retain it, after their infamous sale of Corsica to France. Genoa had now taken part with France. Its government had long covertly assisted the French, and now willingly yielded to the first compulsory menace which required them to exclude the English from their ports. Capraja was seized in consequence; but this act of vigour was not followed up as it ought to have been. England at that time depended too much upon the feeble governments of the Continent, and too little upon itself.

It was determined by the British Cabinet to evacuate Corsica as soon as Spain should form an offensive alliance with France. This event, which, from the moment that Spain had been compelled to make peace, was clearly foreseen, had now taken place (October 19th); and orders for the evacuation of the island were immediately sent out. It was impolitic to annex this island to the British dominions; but having done so, it was disgraceful thus to abandon it. The disgrace would have been spared, and every advantage which could have been derived from the possession of the island secured, if the people had at first been left to form a government for themselves, and protected by us in the enjoyment of their independence.

The viceroy, Sir Gilbert Elliott, deeply felt the impolicy and ignominy of this evacuation. The fleet also was ordered to leave the Mediterranean. This resolution was so contrary to the last instructions which had been received, that Nelson exclaimed:—'Do his Majesty's Ministers know their own minds? They at home,' said he, 'do not know what this fleet is capable of performing —anything and everything. Much as I shall rejoice to see England, I lament our present orders in sackcloth and ashes, so dishonourable to the dignity of England, whose fleets are equal to meet the world in arms: and of all the fleets I ever saw, I never beheld one, in point of officers and men, equal to Sir John Jervis's, who is a Commander-in-Chief able to lead them to glory.' Sir Gilbert Eliott believed that the great body of the Corsicans were perfectly satisfied, as they had good reason to be, with the British Government, sensible of its advantages, and attached to it. However this may have been, when they found that the English intended to evacuate the island, they naturally and necessarily sent to make their peace with the French. The partisans of France found none to oppose them. A Committee of thirty took upon them the government of Bastia, and sequestrated all the British property: armed Corsicans mounted guard at every place, and a plan was laid for seizing the

Viceroy. Nelson, who was appointed to superintend the evacuation, frustrated these projects. At a time when every one else despaired of saving stores, cannon, provisions, or property of any kind, and a privateer was moored across the molehead to prevent all boats from passing, he sent word to the Committee, that if the slightest opposition were made to the embarkment and removal of British property, he would batter the town down. The privateer pointed her guns at the officer who carried this message, and muskets were levelled against his boats from the molehead. Upon this, Captain Sutton, of the *Egmont*, pulling out his watch, gave them a quarter of an hour to deliberate upon their answer. In five minutes after the expiration of that time, the ships, he said, would open their fire. Upon this the very sentinels scampered off, and every vessel came out of the mole. A shipowner complained to the Commodore, that the municipality refused to let him take his goods out of the custom-house. Nelson directed him to say, that unless they were instantly delivered, he would open his fire. The Committee turned pale, and, without answering a word, gave him the keys. Their last attempt was to levy a duty upon the things that were re-embarked. He sent them word, that he would pay them a disagreeable visit, if there were any more complaints. The Committee then finding that they had to deal with a man who knew his own power, and was determined to make the British name respected, desisted from the insolent conduct which they had assumed: and it was acknowledged that Bastia never had been so quiet and orderly since the English were in possession of it. This was on the 14th of October: during the five following days the work of embarkation was carried on, the private property was saved, and public stores to the amount of £200,000. The French, favoured by the Spanish fleet, which was at that time within twelve leagues of Bastia, pushed over troops from Leghorn, who landed near Cape Corse on the 18th; and on the 20th, at one in the morning, entered the citadel, an hour only after the British had spiked the guns, and

evacuated it. Nelson embarked at daybreak, being the last person who left the shore; having thus, as he said, seen the first and the last of Corsica.

Having thus ably effected this humiliating service, Nelson was ordered (Dec. 10th) to hoist his broad pendant on board the *Minerve* frigate, Captain George Cockburn, and with the *Blanche* under his command, proceed to Porto Ferrajo, and superintend the evacuation of that place also. On his way he fell in with two Spanish frigates,—the *Sabina* and the *Ceres*. The *Minerve* engaged the former, which was commanded by Don Jacobo Stuart.[1] After an action of three hours, during which the Spaniards lost one hundred and sixty-four men, the *Sabina* struck. The Spanish Captain, who was the only surviving officer, had hardly been conveyed on board the *Minerve* when another enemy's frigate came up, compelled her to cast off the prize, and brought her a second time to action. After half an hour's trial of strength, this new antagonist wore and hauled off; but a Spanish squadron of two ships of the line and two frigates came in sight. The *Blanche*, from which the *Ceres* had got off, was far to windward, and the *Minerve* escaped only by the anxiety of the enemy to recover their own ship. As soon as Nelson reached Porto Ferrajo, he sent his prisoner in a flag of truce to Carthagena, having returned him his sword; this he did in honour of the gallantry which Don Jacobo had displayed, and not without some feeling of respect for his ancestry.

General de Burgh, who commanded at the Isle of Elba, did not think himself authorised to abandon the place, till he had received specific instructions from England to that effect; professing that he was unable to decide between the contradictory orders of Government, or to guess at what their present intentions might be; but, he said, his only motive for urging delay in this measure arose from a desire that his own conduct might be properly sanctioned, not from any opinion that Porto

[1] A descendant of James II.

Ferrajo ought to be retained. But Naples having made peace, Sir J. Jervis considered his business with Italy as concluded; and the protection of Portugal was the point to which he was now instructed to attend. Nelson, therefore, whose orders were perfectly clear and explicit, withdrew the whole naval establishment from that station, leaving the transports victualled, and so arranged that all the troops and stores could be embarked in three days. He was now about to leave the Mediterranean. Mr. Drake, who had been our Minister at Genoa, expressed to him, on this occasion, the very high opinion which the allies entertained of his conspicuous merit, adding, that it was impossible for anyone, who had the honour of co-operating with him, not to admire the activity, talents, and zeal, which he had so eminently and constantly displayed. In fact, during this long course of services in the Mediterranean, the whole of his conduct had exhibited the same zeal, the same indefatigable energy, the same intuitive judgment, the same prompt and unerring decision, which characterised his after-career of glory. His name was as yet hardly known to the English public; but it was feared and respected throughout Italy.

Nelson's mind had long been irritated and depressed by the fear that a general action would take place before he could join the fleet. At length he sailed from Porto Ferrajo with a convoy for Gibraltar: and having reached that place, proceeded to the westward in search of the Admiral. Off the mouth of the Straits he fell in with the Spanish fleet; and, reaching the station off Cape St. Vincent, communicated this intelligence to Sir John Jervis. He was now directed to shift his broad pendant on board the *Captain*, 74 guns, Captain R. W. Miller; and before sunset the signal was made to prepare for action, and to keep during the night in close order. At daybreak the enemy were in sight. The British force consisted of two ships of 100 guns, two of 98 guns, two of 90 guns, eight of 74 guns, and one of 64 guns; fifteen of the line in all; with four frigates, a sloop, and a cutter. The Spaniards

had one four-decker of 136 guns; six three-deckers of 112 guns; two, of 84 guns; eighteen, of 74 guns; in all twenty-seven ships of the line, with ten frigates and a brig. Their Admiral, Don Joseph de Cordova, had learnt from an American that the English had only nine ships, which was indeed the case when his informer had seen them; for a reinforcement of five ships from England, under Admiral Parker, had not then joined, and the *Culloden* had parted company. Upon this information, the Spanish Commander, instead of going into Cadiz, as was his intention when he sailed from Carthagena, determined to seek an enemy so inferior in force; and relying, with fatal confidence, upon the American account, he suffered his ships to remain too far dispersed, and in some disorder. When the morning of the 14th broke, and discovered the English fleet, a fog for some time concealed their number. That fleet had heard their signal-guns during the night, the weather being fine, though thick and hazy; soon after daylight they were seen very much scattered, while the British ships were in a compact little body. The look-out ship of the Spaniards, fancying that her signal was disregarded because so little notice seemed to be taken of it, made another signal, that the English force consisted of forty sail of the line. The Captain afterwards said, he did this to rouse the Admiral: it had the effect of perplexing him, and alarming the whole fleet. The absurdity of such an act shows what was the state of the Spanish navy under that miserable government, by which Spain was so long oppressed and degraded, and finally betrayed.

Before the enemy could form a regular order of battle, Sir J. Jervis, by carrying a press of sail, came up with them, passed through their fleet, then tacked, and thus cut off nine of their ships from the main body. These ships attempted to form on the larboard tack, either with a design of passing through the British line, or to leeward of it, and thus rejoining their friends. Only one of them succeeded in this attempt; and that only because she was

so covered with smoke, that her intention was not discovered till she had reached the rear; the others were so warmly received, that they put about, took to flight, and did not appear again in the action till its close. The Admiral was now able to direct his attention to the enemy's main body, which was still superior in number to his whole fleet, and greatly so in weight of metal. He made signal to tack in succession. Nelson, whose station was in the rear of the British line, perceived that the Spaniards were bearing up before the wind, with an intention of forming their line and joining their separated ships; or else, of getting off without an engagement. To prevent either of these schemes, he disobeyed the signal without a moment's hesitation, and ordered his ship to be wore. This at once brought him into action with the *Santissima Trinidad*, 136 guns, the *San Joseph*, 112 guns, the *Salvador del Mundo*, 112 guns, the *San Nicolas* 80 guns, the *San Isidro*, 74 guns, another 74 guns, and another first-rate. Troubridge, in the *Culloden*, immediately joined, and most nobly supported him; and for nearly an hour did the *Culloden* and *Captain* maintain what Nelson called 'this apparently, but not really unequal contest'—such was the advantage of skill and discipline, and the confidence which brave men derive from them. The *Blenheim* then passing between them and the enemy gave them a respite, and poured in her fire upon the Spaniards. The *Salvador del Mundo* and *San Isidro* dropped astern, and were fired into in a masterly style, by the *Excellent*, Captain Collingwood. The *San Isidro* struck; and Nelson thought that the *Salvador* struck also. 'But Collingwood,' says he, 'disdaining the parade of taking possession of beaten enemies, most gallantly pushed up, with every sail set, to save his old friend and messmate, who was to appearance in a critical situation;' for the *Captain* was at this time actually fired upon by three first-rates, by the *San Nicolas*, and by a seventy-four, within about pistol-shot of that vessel. The *Blenheim* was ahead, the *Culloden* crippled and astern. Collingwood ranged up, and passed

within ten feet of the *San Nicolas*, giving her a most tremendous fire, then passed on for the *Santissima Trinidad*. The *San Nicolas* luffing up, the *San Joseph* fell on board her, and Nelson resumed his station abreast of them, and close alongside. The *Captain* was now incapable of farther service, either in the line or in chase; she had lost her foretop-mast; not a sail, shroud, or rope was left, and her wheel was shot away. Nelson, therefore, directed Captain Miller to put the helm a-starboard, and, calling for the boarders, ordered them to board.

Captain Berry, who had lately been Nelson's First Lieutenant, was the first man who leaped into the enemy's mizen's chains. Berry was supported from the spritsail-yard, which locked in the *San Nicolas's* main rigging. A soldier of the sixty-ninth broke the upper quarter-gallery window, and jumped in, followed by the Commodore himself, and by others as fast as possible. The cabin doors were fastened, and the Spanish officers fired their pistols at them through the window: the doors were soon forced, and the Spanish Brigadier fell while retreating to the quarter-deck. Nelson pushed on, and found Berry in possession of the poop and the Spanish ensign hauling down. He passed on to the forecastle, where he met two or three Spanish officers, and received their swords. The English were now in full possession of every part of the ship; when a fire of pistols and musketry opened upon them from the Admiral's stern-gallery of the *San Joseph*. Nelson having placed sentinels at the different ladders, and ordered Captain Miller to send more men into the prize, gave orders for boarding that ship from the *San Nicolas*. It was done in an instant, he himself leading the way. Berry assisted him into the main chains; and at that moment a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck-rail, and said they surrendered. It was not long before he was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish Captain presented to him his sword, and told him the Admiral was below, dying of his wounds. Twenty-four of the *Captain's* men were killed, and fifty-six wounded; a fourth part of the loss sustained

by the whole squadron falling upon this ship. Nelson received only a few bruises.

The Spaniards had still eighteen or nineteen ships, which had suffered little or no injury; that part of the fleet which had been separated from the main body in the morning was now coming up, and Sir John Jervis made signal to bring to. His ships could not have formed without abandoning those which they had captured, and running to leeward. The *Captain* was lying a perfect wreck on board her two prizes; and many of the other vessels were so shattered in their masts and rigging, as to be wholly unmanageable. The Spanish Admiral meantime, according to his official account, being altogether undecided in his own opinion respecting the state of the fleet, inquired of his Captains whether it was proper to renew the action. Nine of them answered explicitly, that it was not; others replied, that it was expedient to delay the business. The *Pelayo* and the *Principe Conquistador* were the only ships that were for fighting.

As soon as the action was discontinued, Nelson went on board the Admiral's ship. Sir John Jervis received him on the quarter-deck, took him in his arms, and said he could not sufficiently thank him. For this victory the Commander-in-Chief was rewarded with the title of Earl St. Vincent. Nelson, who, before the action was known in England, had been advanced to the rank of Rear-Admiral, had the Order of the Bath given him. The sword of the Spanish Rear-Admiral, which Sir John Jervis insisted upon his keeping, he presented to the Mayor and Corporation of Norwich, saying, that he knew no place where it could give him or his family more pleasure to have it kept, than in the capital city of the county where he was born. The freedom of that city was voted him on this occasion. But of all the numerous congratulations which he received, none could have affected him with deeper delight than that which came from his venerable father. 'I thank my God,' said this excellent man, 'with all the power of a grateful soul, for the mercies He

has most graciously bestowed on me in preserving you. Not only my few acquaintance here, but the people in general, met me at every corner with such handsome words, that I was obliged to retire from the public eye. The height of glory to which your professional judgment, united with a proper degree of bravery, guarded by Providence, has raised you, few sons, my dear child, attain to, and fewer fathers live to see. Tears of joy have involuntarily trickled down my furrowed cheeks: Who could stand the force of such general congratulation? The name and services of Nelson have sounded through this city of Bath—from the common ballad-singer to the public theatre.' The good old man concluded by telling him, that the field of glory, in which he had so long been conspicuous, was still open, and by giving him his blessing.

Sir Horatio, who had now hoisted his flag as Rear-Admiral of the blue, was sent to bring away the troops from Porto Ferrajo; having performed this, he shifted his flag to the *Theseus* (about May 30th). That ship had taken part in the mutiny[1] in England, and being just arrived from home, some danger was apprehended from the temper of the men. This was one reason why Nelson was removed to her. He had not been on board many weeks before a paper, signed in the name of all the ship's company, was dropped on the quarter-deck, containing these words: 'Success attend Admiral Nelson! God bless Captain Miller! We thank them for the officers they have placed over us. We are happy and comfortable, and will shed every drop of blood in our veins to support them; and the name of the *Theseus* shall be immortalised as high as the *Captain's*.' Wherever Nelson commanded, the men soon became attached to him; in ten days' time he would have restored the most mutinous ship in the navy to order. Whenever an officer fails to win the affections of those who are under his command, he may be assured that the fault is chiefly in himself.

[1] The Mutiny at Spithead.

While Sir Horatio was in the *Theseus*, he was employed in the command of the inner squadron at the blockade of Cadiz. During this service, the most perilous action occurred in which he was ever engaged. Making a night attack upon the Spanish gunboats (July 3rd), his barge was attacked by an armed launch, under their commander, Don Miguel Tregoyen, carrying twenty-six men. Nelson had with him only his ten bargemen, Captain Freemantle, and his coxswain, John Sykes, an old and faithful follower, who twice saved the life of his Admiral, by parrying the blows that were aimed at him, and at last actually interposed his own head to receive the blow of a Spanish sabre, which he could not by any other means avert; thus dearly was Nelson beloved. This was a desperate service—hand to hand with swords; and Nelson always considered that his personal courage was more conspicuous on this occasion than on any other during his whole life. Notwithstanding the great disproportion of numbers, eighteen of the enemy were killed, all the rest wounded, and their launch taken. Nelson would have asked for a lieutenancy for Sykes, if he had served long enough; his manner and conduct, he observed, were so entirely above his situation, that Nature certainly intended him for a gentleman; but though he recovered from the dangerous wound which he received in this act of heroic attachment, he did not live to profit by the gratitude and friendship of his commander.

Twelve days after this rencontre, Nelson sailed at the head of an expedition against Teneriffe. A report had prevailed a few months before, that the Viceroy of Mexico, with the treasure ships, had put into that island. This had led Nelson to meditate the plan of an attack upon it, which he communicated to Earl St. Vincent. He was perfectly aware of the difficulties of the attempt. 'I do not,' said he, 'reckon myself equal to Blake: but, if I recollect right, he was more obliged to the wind coming off the land, than to any exertions of his own. The approach by sea to the anchoring-place is under very high

land, passing three valleys; therefore the wind is either in from the sea, or squally with calms from the mountains;' and he perceived, that if the Spanish ships were won, the object would still be frustrated, if the wind did not come off shore. The land force, he thought, would render success certain; and there were the troops from Elba, with all necessary stores and artillery, already embarked. 'But here,' said he, 'soldiers must be consulted; and I know, from experience, they have not the same boldness in undertaking a political measure that we have; we look to the benefit of our country, and risk our own fame every day to serve her;—a soldier obeys his orders, and no more.' Nelson's experience at Corsica justified him in this harsh opinion;—he did not live to see the glorious days of the British army under Wellington. The army from Elba, consisting of three thousand seven hundred men, would do the business, he said, in three days, probably in much less time; and he would undertake, with a very small squadron, to perform the naval part; for, though the shore was not easy of access, the transports might run in and land the troops in one day.

The report concerning the Viceroy was unfounded; but a homeward-bound Manilla ship put into Santa Cruz at this time, and the expedition was determined upon. It was not fitted out upon the scale which Nelson had proposed. Four ships of the line, three frigates, and the *Fox*, cutter, formed the squadron; and he was allowed to choose such ships and officers as he thought proper. No troops were embarked, the seamen and marines of the squadron being thought sufficient. His orders were to make a vigorous attack, but on no account to land in person, unless his presence should be absolutely necessary. The plan was, that the boats should land in the night, between the fort on the N.E. side of Santa Cruz Bay and the town, make themselves masters of that fort, and then send a summons to the Governor. By midnight (July 21st and 22nd) the three frigates, having the force on board which was intended for this debarkation, approached

within three miles of the place; but, owing to a strong gale of wind in the offing, and a strong current against them in-shore, they were not able to get within a mile of the landing-place before day-break; and then they were seen, and their intention discovered. Troubridge and Bowen, with Captain Oldfield, of the marines, went upon this to consult with the Admiral what was to be done; and it was resolved that they should attempt to get possession of the heights above the fort. The frigates accordingly landed their men; and Nelson stood in with the line-of-battle ships, meaning to batter the fort for the purpose of distracting the attention of the garrison. A calm and contrary current hindered him from getting within a league of the shore; and the heights were by this time so secured, and manned with such a force, as to be judged impracticable. Thus foiled in his plans by circumstances of wind and tide, he still considered it a point of honour that some attempt should be made. This was on the twenty-second of July: he re-embarked his men that night, got the ships, on the twenty-fourth, to anchor about two miles north of the town, and made show as if he intended to attack the heights. At six in the evening, signal was made for the boats to prepare to proceed on the service as previously ordered.

When this was done, Nelson addressed a letter to the Commander-in-Chief (July 24th, 8 p.m.), the last which was ever written with his right hand. 'I shall not,' said he, 'enter on the subject, why we are not in possession of Santa Cruz. Your partiality will give credit, that all has hitherto been done which was possible; but without effect. This night I, humble as I am, command the whole destined to land under the batteries of the town; and to-morrow my head will probably be crowned either with laurel or cypress. I have only to recommend Josiah Nisbet to you and my country. The Duke of Clarence, should I fall, will, I am confident, take a lively interest for my son-in-law, on his name being mentioned.' Perfectly aware how desperate a service this was likely to prove,

before he left the *Theseus* he called Lieutenant Nisbet, who had the watch on deck, into the cabin, that he might assist in arranging and burning his mother's letters. Perceiving that the young man was armed, he earnestly begged him to remain behind. 'Should we both fall, Josiah,' said he, 'what would become of your poor mother! The care of the *Theseus* falls to you; stay, therefore, and take

GROUP OF SAILORS

(From a Picture by J. S. Copley, R.A., in 1797. The figures were painted from life.)

charge of her.' Nisbet replied, 'Sir, the ship must take care of herself; I will go with you to-night, if I never go again.'

He met his Captains at supper on board the *Seahorse*, Captain Freemantle, whose wife, whom he had lately married in the Mediterranean, presided at table. At eleven o'clock the boats, containing between six and seven hundred men, with one hundred and eighty on board the *Fox* cutter, and from seventy to eighty in a

boat which had been taken the day before, proceeded in six divisions toward the town, conducted by all the Captains of the squadron, except Freemantle and Bowen, who attended with Nelson to regulate and lead the way to the attack. They were to land on the mole, and thence hasten, as fast as possible, into the great square; then form, and proceed as should be found expedient. They were not discovered till about half-past one o'clock; when, being within half gun-shot of the landing place, Nelson directed the boats to cast off from each other, give a huzza, and push for the shore. But the Spaniards were exceedingly well prepared: the alarm-bells answered the huzza, and a fire of thirty or forty pieces of cannon, with musketry from one end of the town to the other, opened upon the invaders. Nothing, however, could check the intrepidity with which they advanced. The night was exceedingly dark; most of the boats missed the mole, and went on shore through a raging surf, which stove all to the left of it. The Admiral, Freemantle, Thompson, Bowen, and four or five other boats found the mole: they stormed it instantly, and carried it, though it was defended, as they imagined, by four or five hundred men. Its guns, which were six-and-twenty pounders, were spiked; but such a heavy fire of musketry and grape was kept up from the citadel and the houses at the head of the mole, that the assailants could not advance, and nearly all of them were killed or wounded.

In the act of stepping out of the boat, Nelson received a shot through the right elbow, and fell; but as he fell he caught the sword which he had just drawn in his left hand, determined never to part with it while he lived, for it had belonged to his uncle, Captain Suckling, and he valued it like a relic. Nisbet, who was close to him, placed him at the bottom of the boat, and laid his hat over the shattered arm, lest the sight of the blood, which gushed out in great abundance, should increase his faintness. He then examined the wound, and taking some silk handkerchiefs from his neck, bound them round

tight above the lacerated vessels. Had it not been for this presence of mind in his step-son, Nelson must have perished. One of his bargemen, by name Lovel, tore his shirt into shreds, and made a sling with them for the broken limb. They then collected five other seamen, by whose assistance they succeeded at length in getting the boat afloat; for it had grounded with the falling tide. Nisbet took one of the oars, and ordered the steersman to go close under the guns of the battery, that they might be safe from its tremendous fire. Hearing his voice, Nelson roused himself and desired to be lifted up in the boat, that he might look about him. Nisbet raised him up; but nothing could be seen, except the firing of the guns on shore, and what could be discerned by their flashes upon the stormy sea. In a few minutes a general shriek was heard from the crew of the *Fox*, which had received a shot under water, and went down. Ninety-seven men were lost in her; eighty-three were saved, many by Nelson himself, whose exertions on this occasion greatly increased the pain and danger of his wound. The first ship which the boat could reach happened to be the *Seahorse*; but nothing could induce him to go on board, though he was assured that if they attempted to row to another ship, it might be at the risk of his life. 'I had rather suffer death,' he replied, 'than alarm Mrs. Freemantle, by letting her see me in this state, when I can give her no tidings whatever of her husband.' They pushed on for the *Theseus*. When they came alongside, he peremptorily refused all assistance in getting on board, so impatient was he that the boat should return, in hopes that it might save a few more from the *Fox*. He desired to have only a single rope thrown over the side, which he twisted round his left hand, saying, 'Let me alone; I have yet my legs left and one arm. Tell the surgeon to make haste and get his instruments. I know I must lose my right arm, so the sooner it is off the better.' The spirit which he displayed in jumping up the ship's side astonished everybody.

Freemantle had been severely wounded in the right arm soon after the Admiral. He was fortunate enough to find a boat on the beach, and got instantly to his ship. Thompson was wounded; Bowen killed, to the great regret of Nelson; as was also one of his own officers, Lieutenant Weatherhead, who had followed him from the *Agamemnon*, and whom he greatly and deservedly esteemed. Troubridge, meantime, fortunately for his party, missed the mole in the darkness, but pushed on shore under the batteries, close to the south end of the citadel. Captain Waller of the *Emerald*, and two or three other boats, landed at the same time. The surf was so high that many others put back. The boats were instantly filled with water, and stove against the rocks; and most of the ammunition in the men's pouches was wetted. Having collected a few men, they pushed on to the great square, hoping there to find the Admiral and the rest of the force. The ladders were all lost, so that they could make no immediate attempt on the citadel; but they sent a sergeant with two of the town's-people to summon it. This messenger never returned; and Troubridge having waited about an hour, in painful expectation of his friends, marched to join Captains Hood and Miller, who had effected their landing to the south-west. They then endeavoured to procure some intelligence of the Admiral and the rest of the officers, but without success. By daybreak they had gathered together about eighty marines, eighty pike-men, and one hundred and eighty small-arm seamen; all the survivors of those who had made good their landing. They obtained some ammunition from the prisoners whom they had taken, and marched on to try what could be done at the citadel without ladders. They found all the streets commanded by field-pieces, and several thousand Spaniards, with about a hundred French, under arms, approaching by every avenue. Finding himself without provisions, the powder wet, and no possibility of obtaining either stores or reinforcements from the ships, the boats being lost, Troubridge, with great presence of

mind, sent Captain Samuel Hood with a flag of truce to the Governor, to say he was prepared to burn the town, and would instantly set fire to it if the Spaniards approached one inch nearer. This, however, if he were compelled to do it, he should do with regret; for he had no wish to injure the inhabitants, and he was ready to treat upon these terms,—that the British troops should re-embark with all their arms, of every kind, and take their own boats, if they were saved, or be provided with such others as might be wanting; they, on their part, engaging that the squadron should not molest the town, nor any of the Canary islands; all prisoners on both sides to be given up. When these terms were proposed, the Governor made answer, that the English ought to surrender as prisoners of war; but Captain Hood replied, he was instructed to say, that if the terms were not accepted in five minutes, Captain Troubridge would set the town on fire, and attack the Spaniards at the point of the bayonet. Satisfied with his success, which was indeed sufficiently complete, and respecting, like a brave and honourable man, the gallantry of his enemy, the Spaniard acceded to the proposal, found boats to re-embark them, their own having all been dashed to pieces in landing, and before they parted gave every man a loaf and a pint of wine. 'And here,' says Nelson in his *Journal*, 'it is right we should notice the noble and generous conduct of Don Juan Antonio Gutierrez, the Spanish Governor. The moment the terms were agreed to, he directed our wounded men to be received into the hospitals, and all our people to be supplied with the best provisions that could be procured; and made it known, that the ships were at liberty to send on shore and purchase whatever refreshments they were in want of during the time they might be off the island.' A youth, by name Don Bernardo Collagon, stripped himself of his shirt, to make bandages for one of those Englishmen, against whom, not an hour before, he had been engaged in battle. Nelson wrote to thank the Governor for the humanity which

he had displayed. Presents were interchanged between them. Sir Horatio offered to take charge of his dispatches for the Spanish government; and thus actually became the first messenger to Spain of his own defeat.

The total loss of the English in killed, wounded, and drowned, amounted to two hundred and fifty. Nelson made no mention of his own wound in his official dispatches; but in a private letter to Lord St. Vincent, the first which he wrote with his left hand, he shows himself to have been deeply affected by the failure of this enterprise. 'I am become,' he said, 'a burthen to my friends, and useless to my country; but by my last letter you will perceive my anxiety for the promotion of my step-son, Josiah Nisbet. When I leave your command I become dead to the world: "I go hence, and am no more seen." If from poor Bowen's loss you think it proper to oblige me, I rest confident you will do it. The boy is under obligations to me; but he repaid me by bringing me from the mole of Santa Cruz. I hope you will be able to give me a frigate to convey the remains of my carcass to England.' 'A left-handed Admiral,' he said in a subsequent letter, 'will never again be considered as useful; therefore the sooner I get to a very humble cottage the better, and make room for a sounder man to serve the State.' His first letter to Lady Nelson was written under the same opinion, but in a more cheerful strain. 'It was the chance of war,' said he, 'and I have great reason to be thankful; and I know it will add much to your pleasure to find that Josiah, under God's providence, was principally instrumental in saving my life. I shall not be surprised if I am neglected and forgotten; probably I shall no longer be considered as useful; however, I shall feel rich if I continue to enjoy your affection. I beg neither you nor my father will think much of this mishap; my mind has long been made up to such an event.'

His step-son, according to his wish, was immediately promoted; and honours enough to heal his wounded spirit

awaited him in England. Letters were addressed to him by the First Lord of the Admiralty, and by his steady friend, the Duke of Clarence, to congratulate him on his return, covered as he was with glory. He assured the Duke, in his reply, that not a scrap of that ardour, with which he had hitherto served his King, had been shot away. The freedom of the cities of Bristol and London were transmitted to him. He was invested with the Order of the Bath, and received a pension of £1000 a year. The memorial which, as a matter of form, he was called upon to present on this occasion, exhibited an extraordinary catalogue of services performed during the war. It stated that he had been in four actions with the fleets of the enemy, and in three actions with boats employed in cutting out of harbour, in destroying vessels, and in taking three towns; he had served on shore with the army four months, and commanded the batteries at sieges of Bastia and Calvi; he had assisted at the capture of seven sail of the line, six frigates, four corvettes, and eleven privateers; taken and destroyed near fifty sail of merchant vessels; and actually been engaged against the enemy upwards of a hundred and twenty times, in which service he had lost his right eye and right arm, and been severely wounded and bruised in his body.

CHAPTER V

EARLY in the year 1789, Sir Horatio Nelson hoisted his flag in the *Vanguard* and was ordered to rejoin Earl St. Vincent. Immediately on his rejoining the fleet, he was dispatched to the Mediterranean with a small squadron, in order to ascertain, if possible, the object of the great expedition which at that time was fitting out, under Buonaparte, at Toulon. The defeat of this armament, whatever might be its destination, was deemed by the British Government an object paramount to every other; and Earl St. Vincent was directed, if he thought it necessary, to take his whole force into the Mediterranean, to relinquish, for that purpose, the blockade of the Spanish fleet, as a thing of inferior moment; but, if he should deem a detachment sufficient, 'I think it almost unnecessary,' said the First Lord of the Admiralty, in his secret instructions, 'to suggest to you the propriety of putting it under Sir Horatio Nelson.' It is to the honour of Earl St Vincent, that he had already made the same choice. This appointment to a service in which so much honour might be acquired gave great offence to the senior Admirals of the fleet. Sir William Parker, who was a very excellent officer, and as gallant a man as any in the navy, and Sir John Orde, who on all occasions of service had acquitted himself with great honour, each wrote to Lord Spencer, complaining that so marked a preference should have been given to a junior of the same fleet. This resentment is what most men in a like case would feel; and if the preference thus given to Nelson had not originated in a clear percep-

tion that (as his friend Collingwood said of him a little while before) his spirit was equal to all undertakings, and his resources fitted to all occasions, an injustice would have been done to them by his appointment. But if the services were conducted with undeviating respect to seniority, the naval and military character would soon be brought down to the dead level of mediocrity.

The armament at Toulon consisted of thirteen ships of the line, seven 40-gun frigates, with twenty-four smaller vessels of war, and nearly two hundred transports. Mr. Udney, our consul at Leghorn, was the first person who procured certain intelligence of the enemy's design against Malta; and from his own sagacity, foresaw that Egypt must be their after object. Nelson sailed from Gibraltar on the 9th of May, with the *Vanguard*, *Orion*, and *Alexander*, seventy-fours; the *Caroline*, *Flora*, *Emerald*, and *Terpsichore* frigates; and the *Bonne Citoyenne* sloop of war; to watch this formidable armament. On the 19th, when they were in the Gulf of Lyons, a gale came on from the N.W. It moderated so much on the 20th, as to enable them to get their topgallant-masts and yards aloft. After dark, it again began to blow strong: but the ships had been prepared for a gale, and therefore Nelson's mind was easy. Shortly after midnight, however, his main-topmast went over the side, and the mizen-topmast soon afterward. The night was so tempestuous, that it was impossible for any signal either to be seen or heard; and Nelson determined, as soon as it should be daybreak, to wear, and scud before the gale: but at half-past three the fore-mast went in three pieces, and the bowsprit was found to be sprung in three places. When day broke, they succeeded in wearing the ship with a remnant of the spritsail; this was hardly to have been expected; the *Vanguard* was at that time twenty-five leagues south of the island of Hières, with her head lying to the N.E., and if she had not wore, the ship must have drifted to Corsica. Captain Ball, in the *Alexander*, took her in tow, to carry her into the Sardinian harbour

of St. Pietro. Nelson, apprehensive that this attempt might endanger both vessels, ordered him to cast off: but that excellent officer, with a spirit like his commander's, replied, he was confident he could save the *Vanguard*, and by God's help he would do it. There had been a previous coolness between these great men; but from this time Nelson became fully sensible of the extraordinary talents of Captain Ball, and a sincere friendship subsisted between them during the remainder of their lives. "'I ought not,' said the Admiral, writing to his wife—'I ought not to call what has happened to the *Vanguard* by the cold name of accident: I believe firmly it was the Almighty's goodness, to check my consummate vanity. I hope it has made me a better officer, as I feel confident it has made me a better man. Figure to yourself, on Sunday evening at sunset, a vain man walking in his cabin, with a squadron around him, who looked up to their chief to lead them to glory, and in whom their chief placed the firmest reliance that the proudest ships of equal numbers belonging to France would have lowered their flags; figure to yourself, on Monday morning, when the sun rose, this proud man, his ship dismasted, his fleet dispersed, and himself in such distress, that the meanest frigate out of France would have been an unwelcome guest.' Nelson had, indeed, more reason to refuse the cold name of accident to this tempest, than he was then aware of; for on that very day the French fleet sailed from Toulon, and must have passed within a few leagues of his little squadron, which was thus preserved by the thick weather that came on.

The British Government at this time, with a becoming spirit, gave orders that any port in the Mediterranean should be considered as hostile, where the Governor, or chief magistrate, should refuse to let our ships of war procure supplies of provisions, or of any article which they might require.

In these orders the ports of Sardinia were excepted. The continental possessions of the King of Sardinia were

at this time completely at the mercy of the French, and that prince was now discovering, when too late, that the terms to which he had consented, for the purpose of escaping immediate danger, necessarily involved the loss of the dominions which they were intended to preserve, The citadel of Turin was now occupied by French troops; and his wretched Court feared to afford the common rights of humanity to British ships, lest it should give the French occasion to seize on the remainder of his dominions: a measure for which it was certain they would soon make a pretext, if they did not find one. Nelson was informed, that he could not be permitted to enter the port of St. Pietro. Regardless of this interdict, which, under his circumstances, it would have been an act of suicidal folly to have regarded, he anchored in the harbour; and, by the exertions of Sir James Saumarez, Captain Ball, and Captain Berry, the *Vanguard* was refitted in four days; months would have been employed in refitting her in England. Nelson, with that proper sense of merit, wherever it was found, which proved at once the goodness and the greatness of his character, especially recommended to Earl St. Vincent the carpenter of the *Alexander*, under whose directions the ship had been repaired, stating that he was an old and faithful servant of the crown, who had been nearly thirty years a warrant carpenter; and begging most earnestly that the Commander-in-Chief would recommend him to the particular notice of the Board of Admiralty.

The delay which was thus occasioned was useful to him in many respects: it enabled him to complete his supply of water, and to receive a reinforcement (June 7th), which Earl St. Vincent, being himself reinforced from England, was enabled to send him. It consisted of the best ships of his fleet; the *Culloden*, 74 guns, Captain T. Troubridge; *Goliath*, 74 guns, Captain T. Foley; *Minotaur*, 74 guns, Captain T. Louis; *Defence*, 74 guns, Captain John Peyton; *Bellerophon*, 74 guns, Captain H. D. E. Darby; *Majestic*, 74 guns, Captain G. B. Westcott; *Zealous*, 74 guns, Captain S. Hood; *Swiftsure*, 74 guns,

Captain B. Hallowell; *Theseus*, 74 guns, Captain R. W. Miller; *Audacious*, 74 guns, Captain Davidge Gould. The *Leander*, 50 guns, Captain T. B. Thompson, was afterwards added. These ships were made ready for the service as soon as Earl St. Vincent received advice from England that he was to be reinforced. As soon as the reinforcement was seen from the mast-head of the Admiral's ship, off Cadiz Bay, signal was immediately made to Captain Troubridge to put to sea; and he was out of sight before the ships from home cast anchor in the British station. Troubridge took with him no instructions to Nelson as to the course he was to steer, nor any certain account of the enemy's destination: everything was left to his own judgment. Unfortunately, the frigates had been separated from him in the tempest, and had not been able to rejoin: they sought him unsuccessfully in the Bay of Naples, where they obtained no tidings of his course; and he sailed without them.

The first news of the enemy's armament was, that it had surprised Malta. Nelson formed a plan for attacking it while at anchor at Gozo; but on the 22nd of June intelligence reached him that the French had left that island on the 16th, the day after their arrival. It was clear that their destination was eastward—he thought for Egypt—and for Egypt, therefore, he made all sail. Had the frigates been with him he could scarcely have failed to gain information of the enemy: for want of them, he only spoke three vessels on the way; two came from Alexandria, one from the Archipelago; and neither of them had seen anything of the French. He arrived off Alexandria on the 28th, and the enemy were not there, neither was there any account of them; but the Governor was endeavouring to put the city in a state of defence, having received advice from Leghorn, that the French expedition was intended against Egypt, after it had taken Malta. Nelson then shaped his course to the northward, for Caramania, and steered from thence along the southern side of Candia, carrying a press of sail, both night and

day, with a contrary wind. It would have been his delight, he said, to have tried Buonaparte on a wind. It would have been the delight of Europe, too, and the blessing of the world, if that fleet had been overtaken with its General on board.

Baffled in his pursuit, he returned to Sicily. The Neapolitan Ministry had determined to give his squadron no assistance, being resolved to do nothing which could possibly endanger their peace with the French Directory. By means, however, of Lady Hamilton's influence at Court, he procured secret orders to the Sicilian Governors; and, under those orders obtained everything which he wanted at Syracuse—a timely supply; without which, he always said, he could not have recommenced his pursuit with any hope of success. 'It is an old saying,' said he in his letter, 'that the devil's children have the devil's luck. I cannot to this moment learn, beyond vague conjecture, where the French fleet are gone to; and having gone a round of six hundred leagues at this season of the year, with an expedition incredible, here I am, as ignorant of the situation of the enemy as I was twenty-seven days ago. Every moment I have to regret the frigates having left me; had one-half of them been with me, I could not have wanted information. Should the French be so strongly secured in port that I cannot get at them, I shall immediately shift my flag into some other ship, and send the *Vanguard* to Naples to be refitted; for hardly any person but myself would have continued on service so long in such a wretched state.' Earl St. Vincent he assured, that if the French were above water he would find them out. He still held his opinion that they were bound for Egypt; 'but,' said he to the First Lord of the Admiralty, 'be they bound to the Antipodes, your lordship may rely that I will not lose a moment in bringing them to action.'

On the 25th of July he sailed from Syracuse for the Morea. Anxious beyond measure, and irritated that the enemy should so long have eluded him, the tediousness

of the nights made him impatient; and the officer of the watch was repeatedly called on to let him know the hour, and convince him, who measured time by his own eagerness, that it was not yet daybreak. The squadron made the Gulf of Coron on the 28th. Troubridge entered the port, and returned with intelligence that the French had been seen about four weeks before steering to the S.E. from Candia. Nelson then determined immediately to return to Alexandria; and the British fleet accordingly, with every sail set, stood once more for the coast of Egypt. On the 1st of August, about ten in the morning, they came in sight of Alexandria; the port had been vacant and solitary when they saw it last; it was now crowded with ships, and they perceived with exultation that the tricoloured flag was flying upon the walls. At four in the afternoon, Captain Hood, in the *Zealous*, made the signal for the enemy's fleet. For many preceding days Nelson had hardly taken either sleep or food. He now ordered his dinner to be served, while preparations were making for battle; and when his officers rose from table, and went to their separate stations, he said to them, 'Before this time to-morrow, I shall have gained a peerage, or Westminster Abbey.'

The French, steering direct for Candia, had made an angular passage for Alexandria; whereas Nelson, in pursuit of them, made straight for that place, and thus materially shortened the distance. The comparative smallness of his force made it necessary to sail in close order, and it covered a less space than it would have done if the frigates had been with him; the weather also was constantly hazy. These circumstances prevented the English from discovering the enemy on the way to Egypt, though it appeared, upon examining the journals of the French officers taken in the action, that the two fleets must actually have crossed on the night of the twenty-second of June. During the return to Syracuse, the chances of falling in with them were fewer.

Why Buonaparte, having effected his landing, should

not have suffered the fleet to return, has never yet been explained. This much is certain, that it was detained by his command; though, with his accustomed falsehood, he accused Admiral Brueys, after that officer's death, of having lingered on the coast, contrary to orders. The French fleet arrived at Alexandria on the 1st of July; and Brueys, not being able to enter the port, which time and neglect had ruined, moored his ships in Aboukir Bay, in a strong and compact line of battle; the headmost vessel, according to his own account, being as close as possible to a shoal on the N.W., and the rest of the fleet forming a kind of curve along the line of deep water, so as not to be turned by any means in the S.W. By Buonaparte's desire he had offered a reward of 10,000 livres to any pilot of the country who would carry the squadron in; but none could be found who would venture to take charge of a single vessel drawing more than twenty feet. He had therefore made the best of his situation, and chosen the strongest position which he could possibly take in an open road. The Commissary of the fleet said they were moored in such a manner as to bid defiance to a force more than double their own. This presumption could not then be thought unreasonable. Admiral Barrington, when moored in a similar manner off St. Lucia, in the year 1778, beat off the Comte d'Estaign in three several attacks, though his force was inferior by almost one-third to that which assailed it. Here, the advantage in numbers, both in ships, guns, and men, was in favour of the French. They had thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, carrying eleven hundred and ninety-six guns, and eleven thousand two hundred and thirty men. The English had the same number of ships of the line, and one fifty-gun ship, carrying ten hundred and twelve guns, and eight thousand and sixty-eight men. The English ships were all seventy-fours: the French had three eighty-gun ships, and one three-decker of one hundred and twenty.

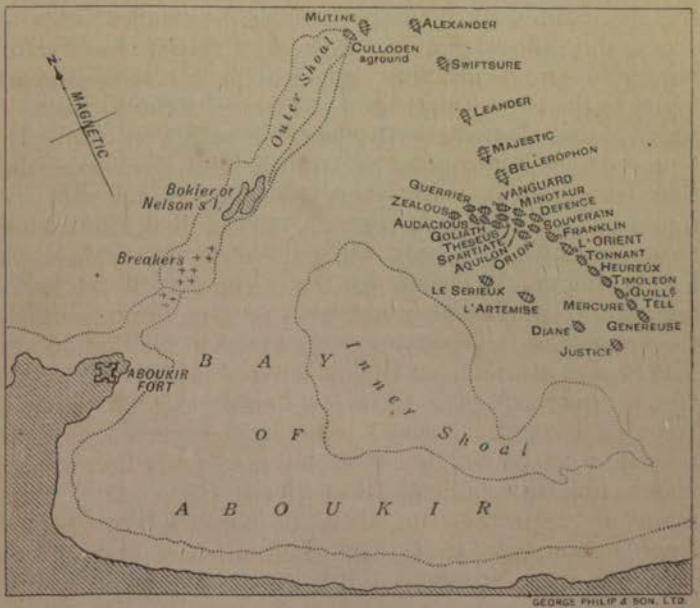
During the whole pursuit, it had been Nelson's practice, whenever circumstances would permit, to have his

Captains on board the *Vanguard* and explain to them his own ideas of the different and best modes of attack, and such plans as he proposed to execute on falling in with the enemy, whatever their situation might be. There is no possible position, it is said, which he did not take into calculation. His officers were thus fully acquainted with his principles of tactics; and such was his confidence in their abilities, that the only thing determined upon, in case they should find the French at anchor, was for the ships to form as most convenient for their mutual support, and to anchor by the stern. 'First gain the victory,' he said, 'and then make the best use of it you can.' The moment he perceived the position of the French, that intuitive genius with which Nelson was endowed displayed itself; and it instantly struck him, that where there was room for an enemy's ship to swing, there was room for one of ours to anchor. The plan which he intended to pursue, therefore, was to keep entirely on the outer side of the French line, and station his ships, as far as he was able, one on the outer bow, and another on the outer quarter,[1] of each of the enemy's. This plan of doubling on the enemy's ships was projected by Lord Hood, when he designed to attack the French fleet at their anchorage in Gourjean Road. Lord Hood found it impossible to make the attempt; but the thought was not lost upon Nelson, who acknowledged himself, on this occasion, indebted for it to his old and excellent commander.

As the squadron advanced, they were assailed by a

[1] The text later on shows that Southey had misunderstood the meaning of doubling on the enemy's ships. The plan was for the first English ships to pass inside the enemy's ships and anchor on the inside of them and between them. The later English ships would then anchor on the outside of the same enemy ships and between them. Thus two British ships would be firing simultaneously at each enemy ship attacked. The British ships, firing slantingwise at the enemy ships, would not hit each other. They avoided this danger by anchoring between and not abreast of each enemy ship.

shower of shot and shell from the batteries on the island, and the enemy opened a steady fire from the starboard side of their whole line, within half gun-shot distance, full into the bows of our van ships. It was received in silence. The men on board every ship were employed aloft in furling sails, and below in hauling the braces,



BATTLE OF THE NILE

and making ready for anchoring. Captain Foley led the way in the *Goliath*, outsailing the *Zealous*, which for some minutes disputed this post of honour with him. He had long conceived that if the enemy were moored in line of battle in with the land, the best plan of attack would be to lead between them and the shore, because the French guns on that side were not likely to be manned, nor even

ready for action. Intending, therefore, to fix himself on the inner bow of the *Guerrier*, he kept as near the edge of the bank as the depth of water would admit; but his anchor hung, and having opened his fire, he drifted to the second ship, the *Conquérant*, before it was clear; then anchored by the stern, inside of her, and in ten minutes shot away her mast. Hood, in the *Zealous*, perceiving this, took the station which the *Goliath* intended to have occupied, and totally disabled the *Guerrier* in twelve minutes. The third ship which doubled the enemy's van was the *Orion*, Sir J. Saumarez; she passed to windward of the *Zealous*, and opened her larboard guns as long as they bore on the *Guerrier*; then passing inside the *Goliath*, sunk a frigate which annoyed her, hauled round toward the French line, and anchoring inside, between the fifth and sixth ships from the *Guerrier*, took her station on the larboard bow of the *Franklin*, and the quarter of the *Peuple Souverain*, receiving and returning the fire of both. The sun was now nearly down (6.31 p.m.). The *Audacious*, Captain Gould, pouring a heavy fire into the *Guerrier* and the *Conquérant*, fixed herself on the larboard bow of the latter, and when that ship struck passed on to the *Peuple Souverain*. The *Theseus*, Captain Miller, followed, brought down the *Guerrier's* remaining main and mizen-masts, then anchored inside of the *Spartiate*, the third in the French line.

While these advanced ships doubled the French line, the *Vanguard* was the first that anchored on the outer side of the enemy, within half pistol-shot of their third ship, the *Spartiate*. Nelson had six colours flying in different parts of his rigging, lest they should be shot away—that they should be struck, no British Admiral considers as a possibility. He veered half a cable, and instantly opened a tremendous fire, under cover of which the other four ships of his division, the *Minotaur*, *Bellerophon*, *Defence*, and *Majestic*, sailed on ahead of the Admiral. In a few minutes, every man stationed at the first six guns in the forepart of the *Vanguard's* deck was

killed or wounded; these guns were three times cleared. Captain Louis, in the *Minotaur*, anchored just ahead, and took off the fire of the *Aquilon*, the fourth in the enemy's line. The *Bellerophon*, Captain Darby, passed ahead, and dropped her stern anchor on the starboard bow of the *Orient*, seventh in the line, Brueys' own ship, of 120 guns, whose difference of force was in proportion of more than seven to three, and whose weight of ball, from the lower deck alone, exceeded that from the whole broadside of the *Bellerophon*. Captain Peyton, in the *Defence*, took his station ahead of the *Minotaur*, and engaged the *Franklin*, the sixth in the line; by which judicious movement the British line remained unbroken. The *Majestic*, Captain Westcott, got entangled with the main rigging of one of the French ships astern of the *Orient*, and suffered dreadfully from that three-decker's fire; but she swung clear, and closely engaging the *Heureux*, the ninth ship on the starboard bow, received also the fire of the *Tonnant*, which was the eighth in the line. The other four ships of the British Squadron, having been detached previous to the discovery of the French, were at a considerable distance when the action began. It commenced at half after six; about seven, night closed, and there was no other light than that from the fire of the contending fleets.

Troubridge in the *Culloden*, then foremost of the remaining ships, was two leagues astern. He came on sounding, as the others had done; as he advanced, the increasing darkness increased the difficulty of the navigation; and suddenly, after having found eleven fathoms water, before the lead could be hove again he was fast aground; nor could all his own exertions, joined to those of the *Leander* and the *Mutine* brig, which came to his assistance, get him off in time to bear a part in the action. His ship, however, served as a beacon to the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure*, which would else, from the course which they were holding, have gone considerably farther on the reef, and must inevitably have been lost. These ships

entered the bay, and took their stations, in the darkness, in a manner still spoken of with admiration by all who remember it. Captain Hallowell, in the *Swiftsure*, as he was bearing down, fell in with what seemed to be a strange sail; Nelson had directed his ships to hoist four lights horizontally at the mizen peak, as soon as it became dark, and this vessel had no such distinction. Hallowell, however, with great judgment, ordered his men not to fire: if she was an enemy, he said, she was in too disabled a state to escape; but, from her sails being loose, and the way in which her head was, it was probable she might be an English ship. It was the *Bellerophon*, overpowered by the huge Orient; her lights had gone overboard, nearly two hundred of her crew were killed or wounded, all her masts and cables had been shot away, and she was drifting out of the line, toward the leeside of the bay. Her station, at this important time, was occupied by the *Swiftsure*, which opened a steady fire on the quarter of the *Franklin* and the bows of the French Admiral. At the same instant Captain Ball, with the *Alexander*, passed under his stern, and anchored within side on his larboard quarter, raking him, and keeping up a severe fire of musketry upon his decks. The last ship which arrived to complete the destruction of the enemy was the *Leander*. Captain Thompson, finding that nothing could be done that night to get off the *Culloden*, advanced with the intention of anchoring athwart-hawse of the *Orient*. The *Franklin* was so near her ahead, that there was not room for him to pass clear of the two; he therefore took his station athwart-hawse of the latter, in such a position as to rake both.

The two first ships of the French line had been dismasted within a quarter of an hour after the commencement of the action; and the others had in that time suffered so severely, that victory was already certain. The third, fourth, and fifth were taken possession of at half-past eight. Meantime Nelson received a severe wound on the head from a piece of langridge shot.

Captain Berry caught him in his arms as he was falling. The great effusion of blood occasioned an apprehension that the wound was mortal. Nelson himself thought so. A large flap of the skin of the forehead, cut from the bone, had fallen over one eye; and the other being blind, he was in total darkness. When he was carried down, the surgeon—in the midst of a scene scarcely to be conceived by those who have never seen a cockpit in time of action, and the heroism which is displayed amid its horrors—with a natural and pardonable eagerness, quitted the poor fellow then under his hands, that he might instantly attend the Admiral. 'No,' said Nelson; 'I will take my turn with my brave fellows.' Nor would he suffer his own wound to be examined till every man who had been previously wounded was properly attended to. Fully believing that the wound was mortal, and that he was about to die, as he had ever desired, in battle and in victory, he called the chaplain, and desired him to deliver what he supposed to be his dying remembrance to Lady Nelson. He then sent for Captain Louis on board from the *Minotaur*, that he might thank him personally for the great assistance which he had rendered to the *Vanguard*; and ever mindful of those who deserved to be his friends, appointed Captain Hardy from the brig to the command of his own ship, Captain Berry having to go home with the news of the victory. When the surgeon came in due time to examine his wound (for it was in vain to entreat him to let it be examined sooner), the most anxious silence prevailed; and the joy of the wounded men, and of the whole crew, when they heard that the hurt was merely superficial, gave Nelson deeper pleasure than the unexpected assurance that his life was in no danger. The surgeon requested, and, as far as he could, ordered him to remain quiet; but Nelson could not rest. He called for his secretary, Mr. Campbell, to write the dispatches. Campbell had himself been wounded; and was so affected at the blind and suffering state of the Admiral, that he was unable to write. The chaplain was

then sent for; but before he came, Nelson, with his characteristic eagerness, took the pen, and contrived to trace a few words, marking his devout sense of the success which had already been obtained. He was now left alone, when suddenly a cry was heard on the deck that the *Orient* was on fire. In the confusion he found his way up, unassisted and unnoticed; and, to the astonishment of every one, appeared on the quarter-deck, where he immediately gave orders that the boats should be sent to the relief of the enemy.

It was soon after nine that the fire on board the *Orient* broke out. Brueys was dead: he had received three wounds, yet would not leave his post; a fourth cut him almost in two. He desired not to be carried below, but to be left to die upon deck. The flames soon mastered his ship. Her sides had just been painted; and the oil-jars and paint-buckets were lying on the poop. By the prodigious light of this conflagration, the situation of the two fleets could now be perceived, the colours of both being clearly distinguishable. About ten o'clock the ship blew up, with a shock which was felt to the very bottom of every vessel. Many of her officers and men jumped overboard, some clinging to the spars and pieces of wreck with which the sea was strewn, others swimming to escape from the destruction which they momently dreaded. Some were picked up by our boats; and some, even in the heat and fury of the action, were dragged into the lower ports of the nearest British ships by the British sailors. The greater part of her crew, however, stood the danger to the last, and continued to fire from the lower deck. This tremendous explosion was followed by a silence not less awful. The firing immediately ceased on both sides; and the first sound which broke the silence was the dash of her shattered masts and yards, falling into the water from the vast height to which they had been exploded.

About seventy of the *Orient's* crew were saved by the English boats. Among the many hundreds who perished

were the Commodore, Casabianca, and his son, a brave boy, only ten years old. They were seen floating on a shattered mast when the ship blew up.

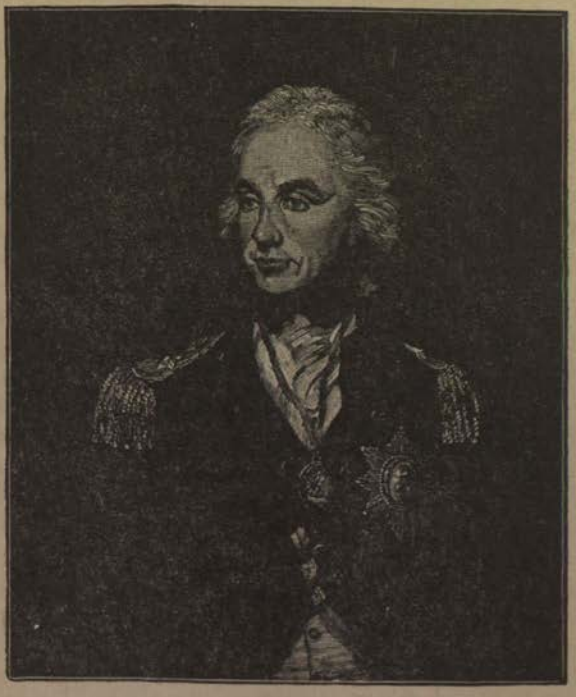
The firing recommenced with the ships to leeward of the centre, and continued till about three. At daybreak, the *Guillaume Tell* and the *Généreux*, the two rear ships of the enemy, were the only French ships of the line which had their colours flying; they cut their cables in the forenoon, not having been engaged, and stood out to sea, and two frigates with them. The *Zealous* pursued; but as there was no other ship in a condition to support Captain Hood, he was recalled. It was generally believed by the officers, that if Nelson had not been wounded, not one of these ships could have escaped; the four certainly could not, if the *Culloden* had got into action; and if the frigates belonging to the squadron had been present, not one of the enemy's fleet would have left Aboukir Bay. These four vessels, however, were all that escaped; and the victory was the most complete and glorious in the annals of naval history. 'Victory,' said Nelson, 'is not a name strong enough for such a scene;' he called it a conquest. Of thirteen sail of the line nine were taken and two burned; of the four frigates, one was sunk, another, the *Artemise*, was burned in a villanous manner by her Captain, M. Estandlet, who having fired a broadside at the *Theseus*, struck his colours, then set fire to the ship, and escaped with most of his crew to shore. The British loss, in killed and wounded, amounted to eight hundred and ninety-five. Westcott was the only captain who fell; three thousand one hundred and five of the French, including the wounded, were sent on shore, and five thousand two hundred and twenty-five perished.

As soon as the conquest was completed, Nelson sent orders through the fleet to return thanksgiving in every ship for the victory with which Almighty God had blessed his Majesty's arms. The French at Rosetta, who with miserable fear beheld the engagement, were at a loss to understand the stillness of the fleet during the performance

of this solemn duty; but it seemed to affect many of the prisoners, officers as well as men; and graceless and godless as the officers were, some of them remarked that it was no wonder such order was preserved in the British Navy, when the minds of our men could be impressed with such sentiments after so great a victory, and at a moment of such confusion. The shore, for an extent of four leagues, was covered with wreck; and the Arabs found employment for many days in burning on the beach the fragments which were cast up, for the sake of the iron. Part of the *Orient's* main-mast was picked up by the *Swiftsure*. Captain Hallowell ordered his carpenter to make a coffin of it; the iron, as well as the wood, was taken from the wreck of the same ship: it was finished as well and handsomely as the workmen's skill and materials would permit; and Hallowell then sent it to the Admiral with the following letter: 'My Lord,—Herewith I send you a coffin made of part of *L'Orient's* main-mast, that when you are tired of this life, you may be buried in one of your Trophies; but may that period be far distant is the wish of your sincere, obedient, and much obliged servant, Benjamin Hallowell.' An offering so strange, and yet so suited to the occasion, was received by Nelson in the spirit with which it was sent. As if he felt it good for him, now that he was at the summit of his wishes, to have death before his eyes, he ordered the coffin to be placed upright in his cabin. Such a piece of furniture, however, was more suitable to his own feelings than to those of his guests and attendants; and an old favourite servant entreated him so earnestly to let it be removed, that at length he consented to have the coffin carried below; but he gave strict orders that it should be safely stowed and reserved for the purpose for which its brave and worthy donor had designed it.

The victory was complete; but Nelson could not pursue it as he would have done, for want of means. Had he been provided with small craft, nothing could have prevented the destruction of the storeships and transports in

the port of Alexandria: four bomb-vessels would at that time have burned the whole in a few hours 'Were I to die this moment,' said he in his dispatches to the Admiralty, '*want of frigates* would be found stamped on my heart!



LORD NELSON
(From the picture by Abbott in the National Portrait Gallery.)

No words of mine can express what I have suffered, and am suffering, for want of them.'

Nelson was now at the summit of glory: congratulations, rewards, and honours were showered upon him by all the States, and princes, and powers to whom his victory gave a respite. The first communication of this

nature which he received was from the Turkish Sultan; who, as soon as the invasion of Egypt was known, had called upon 'all believers to take arms against those swinish infidels the French, that they might deliver these blessed habitations from their accursed hands;' and who had ordered his 'pashas to turn night into day in their efforts to take vengeance.' The present of 'his imperial Majesty, the powerful, formidable, and most magnificent Grand Seignior,' was a pelisse of sables, with broad sleeves, valued at five thousand dollars; and a diamond aigrette, valued at eighteen thousand: the most honourable badge among the Turks; and in this instance more especially honourable, because it was taken from one of the royal turbans. 'If it were worth a million,' said Nelson to his wife, 'my pleasure would be to see it in your possession.' The Sultan also sent, in a spirit worthy of imitation, a purse of two thousand sequins, to be distributed among the wounded. The mother of the Sultan sent him a box, set with diamonds, valued at one thousand pounds. The Czar Paul, in whom the better part of his strangely compounded nature at this time predominated, presented him with his portrait, set in diamonds, in a gold box, accompanied with a letter of congratulation, written by his own hand. The King of Sardinia also wrote to him, and sent a gold box, set with diamonds. Honours in profusion were awaiting him at Naples. He was created Baron Nelson of the Nile, and of Burnham Thorpe, with a pension of £2000 for his own life, and those of his two immediate successors. When the grant was moved in the House of Commons, General Walpole expressed an opinion, that a higher degree of rank ought to be conferred. Mr. Pitt made answer, that he thought it needless to enter into that question. 'Admiral Nelson's fame,' he said, 'would be co-equal with the British name; and it would be remembered that he had obtained the greatest naval victory on record, when no man would think of asking, Whether he had been created a baron, a viscount, or an earl.' It

was strange that, in the very act of conferring a title, the minister should have excused himself for not having conferred a higher one, by representing all titles, on such an occasion, as nugatory and superfluous. True, indeed, whatever title had been bestowed, whether viscount, earl, marquis, duke, or prince, if our laws had so permitted, he who received it would have been Nelson still. That name he had ennobled beyond all addition of nobility: it was the name by which England loved him, France feared him, Italy, Egypt, and Turkey celebrated him: and by which he will continue to be known while the present kingdoms and languages of the world endure, and as long as their history after them shall be held in remembrance.

Whatever may have been the motives of the Ministry, and whatever the formalities with which they excused their conduct to themselves, the importance and magnitude of the victory were universally acknowledged. A grant of £10,000 was voted to Nelson by the East India Company; the Turkish Company presented him with a piece of plate; the City of London presented a sword to him, and to each of his Captains; gold medals were distributed to the Captains; and the First Lieutenants of all the ships were promoted, as had been done after Lord Howe's victory. Nelson was exceedingly anxious that the Captain and First Lieutenant of the *Culloden* should not be passed over because of their misfortune. To Troubridge himself he said, 'Let us rejoice that the ship which got on shore was commanded by an officer whose character is so thoroughly established.' To the Admiralty he stated, that Captain Troubridge's conduct was as fully entitled to praise as that of any one officer in the squadron, and as highly deserving of reward. 'It was Troubridge,' said he, 'who equipped the squadron so soon at Syracuse; it was Troubridge who exerted himself for me after the action; it was Troubridge who saved the *Culloden*, when none that I know in the service would have attempted it.' The gold medal, therefore,

by the King's express desire, was given to Captain Troubridge, 'for his services both before and since, and for the great and wonderful exertion which he made at the time of the action, in saving and getting off his ship.' The private letter from the Admiralty to Nelson informed him, that the First Lieutenants of all the ships *engaged* were to be promoted. Nelson instantly wrote to the Commander-in-Chief. 'I sincerely hope,' said he, 'this is not intended to exclude the First Lieutenant of the *Culloden*. For heaven's sake, for my sake, if it be so, get it altered. Our dear friend Troubridge has endured enough. His sufferings were in every respect more than any of us.' To the Admiralty he wrote in terms equally warm. 'I hope and believe the word *engaged* is not intended to exclude the *Culloden*. The merit of that ship, and her gallant captain, are too well known to benefit by anything I could say. Her misfortune was great in getting aground, while her more fortunate companions were in the full tide of happiness. No; I am confident that my good Lord Spencer will never add misery to misfortune. Captain Troubridge on shore is superior to Captains afloat; in the midst of his great misfortunes he made those signals which prevented certainly the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure* from running on the shoals. I beg your pardon for writing on a subject which I verily believe has never entered your lordship's head; but my heart, as it ought to be, is warm to my gallant friends.' Thus feelingly alive was Nelson to the claims, and interests, and feelings of others. The Admiralty replied, that the exception was necessary, as the ship had not been in action; but they desired the Commander-in-Chief to promote the Lieutenant upon the first vacancy which should occur.

CHAPTER VI

THE battle of the Nile shook the power of France. Her most successful General and her finest army were blocked up in Egypt—hopeless, as it appeared, of return; and the government was in the hands of men without talents, without character, and divided among themselves. Austria, whom Buonaparte had terrified into a peace, at a time when constancy on her part would probably have led to his destruction, took advantage of the crisis to renew the war. Russia also was preparing to enter the field with unbroken forces. Naples, seeing its destruction at hand, and thinking that the only means of averting it was by meeting the danger, after long vacillations, which were produced by the fears, and weakness, and treachery of its council, agreed at last to join this new coalition with a numerical force of eighty thousand men. Nelson told the King, in plain terms, that he had his choice: either to advance, trusting to God for His blessing on a just cause, and prepared to die sword in hand—or to remain quiet, and be kicked out of his kingdom: one of these things must happen. The King made answer, he would go on, and trust in God and Nelson.

His first object was the recovery of Malta; an island which the King of Naples pretended to claim. The Maltese, whom the villanous knights of their order had betrayed to France, had taken up arms against their rapacious invaders, with a spirit and unanimity worthy of the highest praise. They blockaded the French garrison by land, and a small squadron, under Captain Ball, began

to blockade them by sea, on the 12th of October. Twelve days afterwards Nelson arrived. The little island of Gozo, dependent upon Malta, which had also been seized and garrisoned by the French, capitulated soon after his arrival, and was taken possession of by the British, in the name of his Sicilian Majesty—a power who had no better claim to it than France. Having seen this effected, and reinforced Captain Ball, he left that able officer to perform a most arduous and important part, and returned himself to co-operate with the intended movements of the Neapolitans.

General Mack was at the head of the Neapolitan troops —all that is now doubtful concerning this man is, whether he was a coward or a traitor; at that time he was assiduously extolled as a most consummate commander, to whom Europe might look for deliverance: and when he was introduced by the King and Queen to the British Admiral, the Queen said to him, 'Be to us by land, General, what my hero Nelson has been by sea.' Mack, on his part, did not fail to praise the force which he was appointed to command: 'It was,' he said, 'the finest army in Europe.' Nelson agreed with him that there could not be finer men: but when the General, at a review, so directed the operations of a mock fight, that, by an unhappy blunder, his own troops were surrounded instead of those of the enemy, he turned to his friends, and exclaimed, with bitterness, that the fellow did not understand his business. Another circumstance, not less characteristic, confirmed Nelson in his judgment. 'General Mack,' said he, in one of his letters, 'cannot move without five carriages! I have formed my opinion. I heartily pray I may be mistaken.'

While Mack, at the head of thirty-two thousand men, marched into the Roman State, five thousand Neapolitans were embarked on board the British and Portuguese squadron, to take possession of Leghorn. This was effected without opposition; and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, whose neutrality had been so out-

rageously violated by the French, was better satisfied with the measure than some of the Neapolitans themselves. Naselli, their General, refused to seize the French vessels at Leghorn, because he, and the Duke di Sangro, who was ambassador at the Tuscan court, maintained that the King of Naples was not at war with France. 'What!' said Nelson, 'has not the King received, as a conquest made by him, the republican flag taken at Gozo? Is not his own flag flying there, and at Malta, not only by his permission, but by his orders? Is not his flag shot at every day by the French, and their shot returned from batteries which bear that flag? Are not two frigates and a corvette placed under my orders ready to fight the French, meet them where they may? Has not the King sent publicly from Naples, guns, mortars, &c., with officers and artillery, against the French in Malta? If these acts are not tantamount to any written paper, I give up all knowledge of what is war.' This reasoning was of less avail than argument addressed to the General's fears. Nelson told him, that if he permitted the many hundred French who were then in the mole to remain neutral, till they had a fair opportunity of being active, they had one sure resource, if all other schemes failed, which was to set one vessel on fire; the mole would be destroyed, probably the town also; and the port ruined for twenty years. This representation made Naselli agree to the halt measure of laying an embargo on the vessels. Among them were a great number of French privateers, some of which were of such force as to threaten the greatest mischief to our commerce, and about seventy sail of vessels belonging to the Ligurian Republic, as Genoa was now called, laden with corn, and ready to sail for Genoa and France; where their arrival would have expedited the entrance of more French troops into Italy. 'The General,' said Nelson, 'saw, I believe, the consequence of permitting these vessels to depart in the same light as myself; but there is this difference between us: he prudently, and certainly safely, waits the orders of his Court, taking

no responsibility upon himself; I act from the circumstances of the moment, as I feel may be most advantageous for the cause which I serve, taking all responsibility on myself.' It was in vain to hope for anything vigorous or manly from such men as Nelson was compelled to act with. The crews of the French ships and their allies were ordered to depart in two days. Four days elapsed, and nobody obeyed the order; nor, in spite of the representations of the British Minister, Mr. Wyndham, were any means taken to enforce it:—the true Neapolitan shuffle, as Nelson called it, took place on all occasions. After an absence of ten days he returned to Naples: and receiving intelligence there from Mr. Wyndham, that the privateers were at last to be disarmed, the corn landed, and the crews sent away, he expressed his satisfaction at the news in characteristic language, saying, 'So far I am content. The enemy will be distressed; and, thank God, I shall get no money. The world, I know, think that money is our god; and now they will be undeceived as far as relates to us. Down, down with the French! is my constant prayer.'

Odes, sonnets, and congratulatory poems of every description were poured in upon Nelson, on his arrival at Naples. Rejoicings of this kind were of short duration. The King of Naples was with the army which had entered Rome; but the castle of St. Angelo was held by the French, and thirteen thousand French were strongly posted in the Roman States at Castallana. Mack had marched against them with twenty thousand men. Nelson saw that the event was doubtful; or rather that there could be very little hope of the result. But the immediate fate of Naples, as he well knew, hung upon the issue. 'If Mack is defeated,' said he, 'in fourteen days this country is lost; for the Emperor has not yet moved his army, and Naples has not the power of resisting the enemy. It was not a case for choice, but of necessity, which induced the King to march out of his kingdom, and not wait till the French had collected a force

sufficient to drive him out of it in a week.' He had no reliance upon the Neapolitan officers; who, as he described them, seemed frightened at a drawn sword or a loaded gun; and he was perfectly aware of the consequences which the sluggish movements and deceitful policy of the Austrians were likely to bring down upon themselves, and all their continental allies.

His fears were soon verified. 'The Neapolitan officers,' said Nelson, 'did not lose much honour, for, God knows, they had not much to lose; but they lost all they had.' General St. Philip commanded the right wing, of nineteen thousand men. He fell in with three thousand of the enemy; and, as soon as he came near enough, deserted to them. One of his men had virtue enough to level a musket at him, and shot him through the arm; but the wound was not sufficient to prevent him from joining with the French in pursuit of his own countrymen. Cannon, tents, baggage, and military chest, were all forsaken by the runaways, though they lost only forty men: for the French having put them to flight, and got possession of everything, did not pursue an army of more than three times their own number. The main body of the Neapolitans, under Mack, did not behave better. The King returned to Naples, where every day brought with it the tidings of some new disgrace from the army, and the discovery of some new treachery at home; till, four days after his return, the General sent him advice, that there was no prospect of stopping the progress of the enemy, and that the royal family must look to their own personal safety. On the night of the 21st (December) at half-past eight, Nelson landed, brought out the whole royal family, embarked them in three barges, and carried them safely, through a tremendous sea, to the *Vanguard*.

On the morning of the 26th, the royal family were landed at Palermo.

The Sicilian Court were at this time duly sensible of the services which had been rendered them by the British fleet, and their gratitude to Nelson was shown

with proper and princely munificence. They gave him the dukedom and domain of Bronte, worth about £3000 a year. It was some days before he could be persuaded to accept it; the argument which finally prevailed is said to have been suggested by the Queen, and urged, at her request, by Lady Hamilton upon her knees. 'He considered his own honour too much,' she said, 'if he persisted in refusing what the King and Queen felt to be absolutely necessary for the preservation of theirs.' The King himself, also, is said to have addressed him in words, which show that the sense of rank will sometimes confer a virtue upon those who seem to be most unworthy of the lot to which they have been born: 'Lord Nelson, do you wish that your name alone should pass with glory to posterity; and that I, Ferdinand de Bourbon, should appear ungrateful?' He gave him also, when the dukedom was accepted, a diamond-hilted sword, which his father, Charles III of Spain, had given him on his accession to the throne of the two Sicilies. Nelson said, 'The present was magnificent, and worthy of a King' (in a letter to Lady Nelson), 'and I am determined on one thing, that the inhabitants shall be the happiest in all his Sicilian Majesty's dominions; but,' said he, speaking of these and the other remunerations which were made him for his services, 'these presents, rich as they are, do not elevate me; my pride is, that, at Constantinople, from the Grand Signior to the lowest Turk, the name of Nelson is familiar in their mouths; and in this country I am everything which a grateful monarch and people can call me.' Nelson, however, had a pardonable pride in the outward and visible signs of honour, which he had so fairly won. He was fond of his Silician title; the signification, perhaps, pleased him;—Duke of Thunder was what in Dahomey would be called a *strong name*; it was to a sailor's taste; and certainly, to no man could it ever be more applicable. But a simple offering, which he received not long afterwards, from the island of Zante, affected him with a deeper and finer feeling. The Greeks

of that little community sent him a golden-headed sword and a truncheon, set round with all the diamonds that the island could furnish, in a single row. (December 21, 1799.) They thanked him for having, by his victory, preserved that part of Greece from the horrors of anarchy; and prayed that his exploits might accelerate the day, in which, amidst the glory and peace of thrones, the miseries of the human race would cease. This unexpected tribute touched Nelson to the heart. 'No officer,' he said, 'had ever received from any country a higher acknowledgment of his services.'

Having completed his work upon the continent of Italy, Nelson's whole attention was directed towards Malta; where Captain Ball, with most inadequate means, was besieging the French garrison. Never was any officer engaged in a more anxious and painful service: the smallest reinforcement from France would, at any moment, have turned the scale against him: and had it not been for his consummate ability, and the love and veneration with which the Maltese regarded him, Malta must have remained in the hands of the enemy. Men, money, food—all things were wanting. The garrison consisted of five thousand troops—the besieging force of five hundred English and Portuguese marines, and about fifteen hundred armed peasants. Long and repeatedly did Nelson solicit troops to effect the reduction of this important place. 'It has been no fault of the navy,' said he, 'that Malta has not been attacked by land: but we have neither the means ourselves, nor influence with those who have.' The same causes of demurral existed, which prevented British troops from assisting in the expulsion of the French from Rome. Sir James Erskine was expecting General Fox, he could not act without orders; and not having, like Nelson, that lively spring of hope within him, which partakes enough of the nature of faith to work miracles in war, he thought it 'evident that unless a respectable land force, in numbers sufficient to undertake the siege of such a garrison, in one of the

strongest places of Europe, and supplied with proportionate artillery and stores, were sent against it, no reasonable hope could be entertained of its surrender.' Nelson groaned over the spirit of over-reasoning caution, and unreasoning obedience. 'My heart,' said he, 'is almost broken. If the enemy gets supplies in, we may bid adieu to Malta: all the force we can collect would then be of little use against the strongest place in Europe. To say that an officer is never, for any object, to alter his orders, is what I cannot comprehend. The circumstances of this war so often vary, that an officer has almost every moment to consider, What would my superiors direct, did they know what is passing under my nose?' 'But sir,' said he, writing to the Duke of Clarence (November 9th), 'I find few think as I do. To obey orders is all perfection. To serve my King, and to destroy the French, I consider as the great order of all, from which little ones spring: and if one of these little ones militate against it (for who can tell exactly at a distance?) I go back, to obey the great order and object, to *down, down* with the damned French villains! Excuse my warmth; but my blood boils at the name of Frenchman!'

At length, General Fox arrived at Minorca (November), and permitted Colonel Graham to go to Malta, but with means miserably limited. In fact, the expedition was at a stand for want of money; when Troubridge, arriving at Messina, to co-operate in it, and finding this fresh delay, immediately offered all that he could command of his own. 'I procured him, my lord,' said he to Nelson, 'fifteen thousand of my cobs: every farthing and every atom of me shall be devoted to the cause.' 'What can this mean?' said Nelson (November 28th), when he learned that Colonel Graham was ordered not to incur any expense for stores, or any articles except provisions! 'the cause cannot stand still for want of a little money. If nobody will pay it, I will sell Bronte, and the Emperor of Russia's box.' And he actually pledged Bronte for £6600 if there should be any diffi-

culty about paying the bills. The long-delayed expedition was thus at last sent forth: but Troubridge little imagined in what scenes of misery he was to bear his part. He looked to Sicily for supplies: it was the interest, as well as the duty, of the Sicilian Government to use every exertion for furnishing them; and Nelson and the British Ambassador were on the spot to press upon them the necessity of exertion. But, though Nelson saw with what a knavish crew the Sicilian Court was surrounded, he was blind to the vices of the Court itself; and never even suspected the crooked policy which it was remorselessly pursuing. The Maltese and the British in Malta severely felt it. Troubridge, who had the truest affection for Nelson, wrote, 'My lord, we are dying off fast for want. I learn that Sir William Hamilton says Prince Luzzi refused corn some time ago, and Sir William does not think it worth while making another application. If that be the case, I wish he commanded at this distressing scene instead of me. Puglia had an immense harvest; near thirty sail left Messina, before I did, to load corn. Will they let us have any? if not, a short time will decide the business. The German interest prevails. I wish I was at your lordship's elbow for an hour. *All, all* will be thrown on you! I will parry the blow as much as is in my power; I foresee much mischief brewing. God bless your lordship; I am miserable I cannot assist your operations more. Many happy returns of this day to you [it was the first of the new year]. I never spent so miserable a one. I am not very tender-hearted; but really the distress here would even move a Neapolitan.' Soon afterwards (January 5th) he wrote: 'I have this day saved thirty thousand people from starving; but with this day my ability ceases. As the King of Naples, or rather the Queen and her party, are bent on starving us, I see no alternative but to leave these poor unhappy people to starve, without our being witnesses to their distress. I curse the day I ever served the King of Naples. We have characters, my lord, to lose; these people have

none. Do not suffer their infamous conduct to fall on us. Our country is just, but severe. Such is the fever of my brain this minute, that I *assure you, on my honour*, if the Palermo traitors were here, I would shoot them first, and then myself. Girgenti is full of corn; the money is ready to pay for it; we do not ask it as a gift. Oh, could you see the horrid distress I daily experience, something would be done! Some engine is at work against us at Naples; and I believe, in my former letters, I hit on the proper person. If you complain, he will be immediately promoted, agreeably to the Neapolitan custom. All I write to you is known at the Queen's. For my own part, I look on the Neapolitans as the worst of intriguing enemies; every hour shows me their infamy and duplicity. I pray your lordship be cautious; your honest, open manner of acting will be made a handle of. When I see you, and tell of their infamous tricks, you will be as much surprised as I am. The whole will fall on you, which hurts me much.'

Nelson was not, and could not be, insensible to the distress which his friend so earnestly represented. He begged, almost on his knees, he said, small supplies of money and corn, to keep the Maltese from starving. And when the Court granted a small supply, protesting their poverty, he believed their protestations, and was satisfied with their professions, instead of insisting that the restrictions upon the exportation of corn should be withdrawn. The anxiety, however, which he endured, affected him so deeply that he said it had broken his spirit for ever. Happily all that Troubridge, with so much reason, foreboded, did not come to pass. For Captain Ball, with more decision than Nelson himself would have shown at that time, and upon that occasion, ventured upon a resolute measure, for which his name would deserve always to be held in veneration by the Maltese, even if it had no other claims to the love and reverence of a grateful people. Finding it hopeless longer to look for succour, or common humanity, from the deceitful and

infatuated Court of Sicily, which persisted in prohibiting, by sanguinary edicts, the exportation of supplies, at his own risk he sent his First Lieutenant to the port of Girgenti, with orders to seize and bring with him to Malta the ships which were there lying laden with corn; of the number of which he had received accurate information. These orders were executed to the great delight and advantage of the shipowners and proprietors, and the necessity of raising the siege was removed.

Nelson himself, at the beginning of February, sailed for Malta. On the way (February 18th) he fell in with a French squadron bound for its relief, and consisting of the *Généreux*, 74 guns, three frigates, and a corvette. One of these frigates and the line-of-battle ship were taken: the others escaped, but failed in their purpose of reaching La Valette. This success was peculiarly gratifying to Nelson, for many reasons. During some months he had acted as Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, while Lord Keith was in England. Lord Keith was now returned; and Nelson had, upon his own plan, and at his own risk, left him, to sail for Malta, 'for which,' said he, 'if I had not succeeded, I might have been broke: and, if I had not acted thus, the *Généreux* never would have been taken.' This ship was one of those which had escaped from Aboukir. Two frigates, and the *Guillaume Tell*, 86 guns, were all that now remained of the fleet which Buonaparte had conducted to Egypt. The *Guillaume Tell* was at this time closely watched in the harbour of La Valette; and shortly afterwards, attempting to make her escape from thence, was taken (March 30th) after an action, in which greater skill was never displayed by British ships, nor greater gallantry by an enemy. She was taken by the *Foudroyant*, *Lion*, and *Penelope* frigates. Nelson, rejoicing at what he called this glorious finish to the whole French Mediterranean fleet, rejoiced also that he was not present to have taken a sprig of these brave men's laurels. 'They are,' said he (to Lord Keith, April 8th), 'and I glory in them, my darling children, served

in my school; and all of us caught our professional zeal and fire from the great and good Earl of St. Vincent. What a pleasure, what happiness, to have the Nile fleet all taken, under my orders and regulations!' The two frigates still remained in La Valette: before its surrender they stole out: one was taken in the attempt, the other was the only ship of the whole fleet which escaped capture or destruction.

Letters were found on board the *Guillaume Tell* showing that the French were now become hopeless of preserving the conquest which they had acquired. Troubridge and his brother officers were anxious that Nelson should have the honour of signing the capitulation. They told him that they absolutely, as far as they dared, insisted on his staying to do this. Sir Sidney Smith had been sent to Egypt, with orders to take under his command the squadron which Nelson had left there. Sir Sidney appears to have thought that this command was to be independent of Nelson: and Nelson himself thinking so, determined to return, saying to Earl St. Vincent, 'I do feel, for I am a man, that it is impossible for me to serve in these seas with a squadron under a junior officer.' Earl St. Vincent seems to have dissuaded him from this resolution: some heart-burnings, however, still remained, and some incautious expressions of Sir Sidney's were noticed by him in terms of evident displeasure. But this did not continue long, as no man bore more willing testimony than Nelson to the admirable defence of Acre.

He differed from Sir Sidney as to the policy which ought to be pursued toward the French in Egypt; and strictly commanded him, in the strongest language, not on any pretence to permit a single Frenchman to leave the country, saying, that he considered it nothing short of madness to permit that band of thieves to return to Europe. 'No,' said he, 'to Egypt they went with their own consent, and there they shall remain, while Nelson commands this squadron: for never, never, will he consent to the return of one ship or Frenchman. I wish them

to perish in Egypt, and give an awful lesson to the world of the justice of the Almighty.' Buonaparte's escape was the more regretted by Nelson, because, if he had had sufficient force, he thought it would certainly have been prevented. He wished to keep ships upon the watch to intercept anything coming from Egypt: but the Admiralty calculated upon the assistance of the Russian fleet, which failed when it was most wanted. The ships which should have been thus employed were then required for more pressing services; and the Corsican was thus enabled to reach Europe in safety; there to become the guilty instrument of a wider-spreading destruction than any with which the world had ever before been visited.

A ship could not be spared to convey Nelson to England; he therefore travelled through Germany to Hamburg, in company with his inseperable friends, Sir William and Lady Hamilton. The Queen of Naples went with them to Vienna. While they were at Leghorn, upon a report that the French were approaching (for, through the folly of weak courts, and the treachery of venal cabinets, they had now recovered their ascendancy in Italy), the people rose tumultuously, and would fain have persuaded Nelson to lead them against the enemy. Public honours, and yet more gratifying testimonials of public admiration, awaited Nelson wherever he went.

CHAPTER VII

NELSON was welcomed in England with every mark of popular honour. At Yarmouth, where he landed (November 6th), every ship in the harbour hoisted her colours. The Mayor and Corporation waited upon him with the freedom of the town, and accompanied him in procession to church, with all the naval officers on shore, and the principal inhabitants. Bonfires and illuminations concluded the day; and, on the morrow, the volunteer cavalry drew up and saluted him as he departed, and followed the carriage to the borders of the county. At Ipswich, the people came out to meet him, drew him a mile into the town, and three miles out. When he was in the *Agamemnon*, he wished to represent this place in Parliament, and some of his friends had consulted the leading men of the Corporation; the result was not successful; and Nelson, observing that he would endeavour to find out a preferable path into Parliament, said there might come a time when the people of Ipswich would think it an honour to have had him for their representative. In London, he was feasted by the City, drawn by the populace from Ludgate Hill to Guildhall, and received the thanks of the Common Council for his great victory, and a golden-hilted sword studded with diamonds.

The Addington Administration was just at this time formed; and Nelson, who had solicited employment, and been made Vice-Admiral of the Blue, was sent to the Baltic, as second in command, under Sir Hyde Parker, by Earl St. Vincent, the new First Lord of the Admiralty.

The three Northern Courts had formed a confederacy for making England resign her naval rights. Of these courts, Russia was guided by the passions of its Emperor, Paul, a man not without fits of generosity, and some natural goodness, but subject to the wildest humours of caprice, and crazed by the possession of greater power than can ever be safely, or perhaps innocently, possessed by weak humanity. Denmark was French at heart; ready to co-operate in all the views of France, to recognise all her usurpations, and obey all her injunctions. Sweden, under a king whose principles were right, and whose feelings were generous, but who had a taint of hereditary insanity, acted in acquiescence with the dictates of two powers whom it feared to offend. The Danish navy at this time consisted of twenty-three ships of the line, with about thirty-one frigates and smaller vessels, exclusive of guard ships. The Swedes had eighteen ships of the line, fourteen frigates and sloops, seventy-four galleys and smaller vessels, besides gunboats; and this force was in a far better state of equipment than the Danish. The Russians had eighty-two sail of the line and forty frigates. Of these there were forty-seven sail of the line at Cronstadt, Revel, Petersburg, and Archangel; but the Russian fleet was ill manned, ill officered, and ill equipped. Such a combination under the influence of France would soon have become formidable; and never did the British Cabinet display more decision than in instantly preparing to crush it. They erred, however, in permitting any petty consideration to prevent them from appointing Nelson to the command. The public properly murmured at seeing it entrusted to another; and he himself said to Earl St. Vincent, that, circumstanced as he was, this expedition would probably be the last service that he should ever perform. (March 2nd.) The Earl in reply, besought him, for God's sake, not to suffer himself to be carried away by any sudden impulse.

The season happened to be unusually favourable; so mild a winter had not been known in the Baltic for many

years. When Nelson joined the fleet at Yarmouth, he found the Admiral 'a little nervous about dark nights and fields of ice.' 'But we must brace up,' said he; 'these are not times for nervous systems. I hope we shall again give our northern enemies that hailstorm of bullets, which gives our dear country the dominion of the sea.' Before the fleet left Yarmouth, it was sufficiently known that its destination was against Denmark.

The fleet sailed on the 12th of March. Mr. Vansittart sailed in it; the British Cabinet still hoping to obtain its end by negotiation. It is well for England, that Sir Hyde Parker placed a fuller confidence in Nelson than the Government seems to have done at this most important crisis. Her enemies might well have been astonished at learning that any other man should for a moment have been thought of for the command. But so little deference was paid, even at this time, to his intuitive and all-commanding genius, that when the fleet had reached its first rendezvous, at the entrance of the Cattegat, he had received no official communication whatever of the intended operations. His own mind had been made up upon them with its accustomed decision. 'All I have gathered of our first plans,' said he, 'I disapprove most exceedingly. Honour may arise from them; good cannot. I hear we are likely to anchor outside of Cronenburg Castle, instead of Copenhagen, which would give weight to our negotiation. A Danish minister would think twice before he would put his name to war with England, when the next moment he would probably see his master's fleet in flames, and his capital in ruins. The Dane should see our flag waving every moment he lifted up his head.' (March 16th.)

Mr. Vansittart left the fleet at the Scaw (March 19th), and preceded it in a frigate, with a flag of truce. Precious time was lost by this delay, which was to be purchased by the dearest blood of Britain and Denmark; according to the Danes themselves, the intelligence that a British fleet was seen off the Sound produced a much more

general alarm in Copenhagen than its actual arrival in the Roads; for their means of defence were at that time in such a state, that they could hardly hope to resist, still

MAP OF DENMARK
TO ILLUSTRATE THE BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN

less to repel, an enemy. On the 21st Nelson had a long conference with Sir Hyde; and the next day addressed a letter to him, worthy of himself and of the occasion. Mr. Vansittart's report had then been received. It

represented the Danish Government as in the highest degree hostile; and their state of preparation as exceeding what our Cabinet had supposed possible; for Denmark had profited, with all activity, of the leisure which had so impoliticly been given her. 'The more I have reflected,' said Nelson to his commander, 'the more I am confirmed in opinion, that not a moment should be lost in attacking the enemy. They will every day and every hour be stronger; we shall never be so good a match for them as at this moment. The only consideration in my mind is, how to get at them with the least risk to our ships. Here you are, with almost the safety, certainly with the honour, of England, more entrusted to you than ever yet fell to the lot of any British officer. On your decision depends whether our country shall be degraded in the eyes of Europe, or whether she shall rear her head higher than ever. Again do I repeat, never did our country depend so much on the success of any fleet as on this. How best to honour our country, and abate the pride of her enemies, must be the subject of your deepest consideration.'

Supposing him to force the passage of the Sound, Nelson thought some damage might be done among the masts and yards; though, perhaps, not one of them but would be serviceable again. 'If the wind be fair,' said he, 'and you determine to attack the ships and Crown Islands, you must expect the natural issue of such a battle —ships crippled, and, perhaps, one or two lost; for the wind which carries you in will most probably not bring out a crippled ship. This mode I call taking the bull by the horns. It, however, will not prevent the Revel ships, or the Swedes, from joining the Danes; and to prevent this is, in my humble opinion, a measure absolutely necessary; and still to attack Copenhagen.' For this he proposed two modes. One was, to pass Cronenburg, taking the risk of damage; take the deepest and straightest channel above the Middle Grounds; and then coming down the Garbar, or King's Channel, attack the Danish

line of floating batteries and ships, as might be found convenient. This would prevent a junction, and might give an opportunity of bombarding Copenhagen. Or to take the passage of the Belt, which might be accomplished in four or five days; and then the attack by Draco might be made, and the junction of the Russians prevented. Supposing them through the Belt, he proposed that a detachment of the fleet should be sent to destroy the Russian squadron at Revel; and that the business at Copenhagen should be attempted with the remainder. 'The measure,' he said, 'might be thought bold: but I am of opinion the boldest measures are the safest.'

The pilots, as men who had nothing but safety to think of, were terrified by the formidable report of the batteries of Elsineur, and the tremendous preparations which our negotiators, who were now returned from their fruitless mission, had witnessed. They, therefore, persuaded Sir Hyde to prefer the passage of the Belt. 'Let it be by the Sound, by the Belt, or anyhow,' cried Nelson, 'only lose not an hour!' On the 26th, they sailed for the Belt: such was the habitual reserve of Sir Hyde, that his own Captain, the Captain of the fleet, did not know which course he had resolved to take till the fleet were getting under weigh. When Captain Domett was thus apprised of it, he felt it his duty to represent to the Admiral his belief that if that course were persevered in, the ultimate object would be totally defeated: it was liable to long delays, and to accidents of ships grounding; in the whole fleet there were only one Captain and one pilot who knew anything of this formidable passage, and their knowledge was very slight. Domett urged these reasons so forcibly that Sir Hyde's opinion was shaken, and he consented to bring the fleet to, and send for Nelson on board. There can be little doubt but that the expedition would have failed, if Captain Domett had not thus timely and earnestly given his advice. Nelson entirely agreed with him; and it was finally determined to take the passage of the Sound—and the fleet returned to its former anchorage.

Nelson, who was now appointed to lead the van, shifted his flag to the *Elephant*, Captain Foley—a lighter ship than the *St. George*, and, therefore, fitter for the expected operations. The two following days were calm. Orders had been given to pass through the Sound as soon as the wind would permit; and, on the afternoon of the 29th, the ships were cleared for action, with an alacrity characteristic of British seamen. At daybreak, on the 30th, it blew a topsail breeze from N.W. The signal was made, and the fleet moved on in order of battle; Nelson's division in the van, Sir Hyde's in the centre, and Admiral Graves's in the rear.

The Sound, which Denmark had so long considered as the key of the Baltic, is, in its narrowest part, about three miles wide; and here the city of Elsineur is situated: except Copenhagen the most flourishing of the Danish towns. Every vessel which passess lowers her topgallant sails, and pays toll at Elsineur; a toll which is believed to have had its origin in the consent of the traders to that sea, Denmark taking upon itself the charge of constructing lighthouses, and erecting signals, to mark the shoals and rocks from the Cattegat to the Baltic.

The Sound being the only frequented entrance to the Baltic, the great Mediterranean of the North, few parts of the sea display so frequent a navigation. In the height of the season not fewer than a hundred vessels pass every four-and-twenty hours, for many weeks in succession: but never had so busy or so splendid a scene been exhibited there as on this day, when the British fleet prepared to force that passage, where, till now, all ships had lowered their topsails to the flag of Denmark. The whole force consisted of fifty-one sail of various descriptions; of which sixteen were of the line. The greater part of the bomb and gun vessels took their stations off Cronenburg Castle, to cover the fleet; while others on the larboard were ready to engage the Swedish shore. The Danes, having improved every moment which ill-timed negotiation and baffling weather gave them, had lined their shores

with batteries; and as soon as the *Monarch*, which was the leading ship, came abreast of them, a fire was opened from about a hundred pieces of cannon and mortars: our light vessels immediately, in return, opened their fire upon the castle. The enemy's shot fell near enough to splash the water on board our ships; not relying upon any forbearance of the Swedes, they meant to have kept the mid-channel; but, when they perceived that not a shot was fired from Helsinburg, and that no batteries were to be seen on the Swedish shore, they inclined to that side, so as completely to get out of reach of the Danish guns. The uninterrupted blaze which was kept up from them till the fleet had passed, served only to exhilarate our sailors, and afford them matter for jest, as the shot fell in showers a full cable's length short of its destined aim. A few rounds were returned from some of our leading ships, till they perceived its inutility; this, however, occasioned the only bloodshed of the day, some of our men being killed and wounded by the bursting of a gun. As soon as the main body had passed, the gun vessels followed, desisting from their bombardment, which had been as innocent as that of the enemy; and, about mid-day, the whole fleet anchored between the island of Huen and Copenhagen. Sir Hyde, with Nelson, Admiral Graves, some of the senior Captains, and the commanding officers of the artillery and the troops, then proceeded in a lugger, to reconnoitre the enemy's means of defence; a formidable line of ships, radeaus, pontoons, galleys, fire-ships, and gun-boats, flanked and supported by extensive batteries, and occupying, from one extreme point to the other, an extent of nearly four miles.

A council of war was held in the afternoon. It was apparent that the Danes could not be attacked without great difficulty and risk; and some of the members of the council spoke of the number of the Swedes and the Russians whom they should afterwards have to engage, as a consideration which ought to be borne in mind. Nelson, who kept pacing the cabin, impatient as he ever

was of anything which savoured of irresolution, repeatedly said, 'The more numerous the better, I wish they were twice as many; the easier the victory, depend on it.' The plan upon which he had determined, if ever it should be his fortune to bring a Baltic fleet to action, was, to attack the head of their line, and confuse their movements. 'Close with a Frenchman,' he used to say, 'but outmanœuvre a Russian.' He offered his services for the attack, requiring ten sail of the line, and the whole of the smaller craft. Sir Hyde gave him two more line of battle ships than he asked, and left everything to his judgment.

The enemy's force was not the only, nor the greatest, obstacle with which the British fleet had to contend; there was another to be overcome before they could come in contact with it. The channel was little known, and extremely intricate; all the buoys had been removed: and the Danes considered this difficulty as almost insuperable, thinking the channel impracticable for so large a fleet. Nelson himself saw the soundings made, and the buoys laid down, boating it upon this exhausting service, day and night, till it was effected. When this was done, he thanked God for having enabled him to get through this difficult part of his duty. 'It had worn him down,' he said, 'and was infinitely more grievous to him than any resistance which he could experience from the enemy.'

At the first council of war, opinions inclined to an attack from the eastward; but the next day, the wind being southerly, after a second examination of the Danish position, it was determined to attack from the south, approaching in the manner which Nelson had suggested in his first thoughts. On the morning of the 1st of April the whole fleet removed to an anchorage within two leagues of the town, and off the N.W. end of the Middle Ground; a shoal lying exactly before the town, at about three quarters of a mile distance, and extending along its whole sea front. The King's Channel, where there is deep water, is between this shoal and the town; and here the Danes had arranged their line of defence, as near the shore

as possible; nineteen ships and floating batteries, flanked at the end nearest the town by the Crown Batteries, which were two artificial islands at the mouth of the harbour —most formidable works; the larger one having, by the Danish account, sixty-six guns; but as Nelson believed, eighty-eight. The fleet having anchored, Nelson, with Riou in the *Amazon*, made his last examination of the ground; and, about one o'clock, returning to his own ship, threw out the signal to weigh. It was received with a shout throughout the whole division. They weighed with a light and favourable wind. The narrow channel between the island of Saltholm and the Middle Ground had been accurately buoyed; the small craft pointed out the course distinctly. Riou led the way; the whole division coasted along the outer edge of the shoal, doubled its farther extremity, and anchored there off Draco Point, just as the darkness closed—the headmost of the enemy's line not being more than two miles distant. The signal to prepare for action had been made early in the evening; and as his own anchor dropped, Nelson called out, 'I will fight them the moment I have a fair wind.' It had been agreed that Sir Hyde, with the remaining ships, should weigh on the following morning, at the same time as Nelson, to menace the Crown Batteries on his side, and the four ships of the line which lay at the entrance of the arsenal; and to cover our own disabled ships as they came out of action.

The Danes, meantime, had not been idle. No sooner did the guns of Cronenburg make it known to the whole city that all negotiation was at an end, that the British fleet was passing the Sound, and that the dispute between the two crowns must now be decided by arms, than a spirit displayed itself most honourable to the Danish character. All ranks offered themselves to the service of their country; the University furnished a corps of twelve hundred youth, the flower of Denmark—it was one of those emergencies in which little drilling or discipline is necessary to render courage available; they had nothing

to learn but how to manage the guns, and day and night were employed in practising them. When the movements of Nelson's squadron were perceived, it was known when and where the attack was to be expected, and the line of defence was manned indiscriminately by soldiers, sailors, and citizens. Had not the whole attention of the Danes been directed to strengthen their own means of defence, they might most materially have annoyed the invading squadron, and perhaps frustrated the impending attack; for the British ships were crowded in an anchoring ground of little extent. It was calm, so that mortar-boats might have acted against them to the utmost advantage; and they were within range of shells from Amak Island. A few fell among them; but the enemy soon ceased to fire. It was learned afterwards, that, fortunately for the fleet, the bed of the mortar had given way; and the Danes either could not get it replaced, or, in the darkness, lost the direction.

This was an awful night for Copenhagen—far more so than for the British fleet, where the men were accustomed to battle and victory, and had none of those objects before their eyes which rendered death terrible. Nelson sat down to table with a large party of his officers; he was, as he was ever wont to be when on the eve of action, in high spirits, and drank to a leading wind, and to the success of the morrow. After supper they returned to their respective ships, except Riou, who remained to arrange the order of battle with Nelson and Foley, and to draw up instructions; Hardy, meantime, went in a small boat to examine the channel between them and the enemy; approaching so near, that he sounded round their leading ship with a pole, lest the noise of throwing the lead should discover him. The incessant fatigue of body, as well as mind, which Nelson had undergone during the last three days, had so exhausted him, that he was earnestly urged to go to his cot; and his old servant, Allen, using that kind of authority which long and affectionate services entitled and enabled him to assume

on such occasions, insisted upon his complying. The cot was placed on the floor, and he continued to dictate from it. About eleven Hardy returned, and reported the practicability of the channel, and the depth of water up to the enemy's line. About one, the orders were completed; and half a dozen clerks, in the foremost cabin, proceeded to transcribe them: Nelson frequently calling out to them from his cot to hasten their work, for the wind was becoming fair. Instead of attempting to get a few hours' sleep, he was constantly receiving reports on this important point. At daybreak it was announced as becoming perfectly fair. The clerks finished their work about six. Nelson, who was already up, breakfasted, and made signal for all captains. The land forces, and five hundred seamen, under Captain Freemantle, and the Hon. Colonel Stewart, were to storm the Crown Battery as soon as its fire should be silenced; and Riou, whom Nelson had never seen till this expedition, but whose worth he had instantly perceived, and appreciated as it deserved, had the *Blanche* and *Alcmene* frigates, the *Dart* and *Arrow* sloops, and the *Zephyr* and *Otter* fire-ships, given him, with a special command to act as circumstances might require; every other ship had its station appointed.

Between eight and nine, the pilots and masters were ordered on board the Admiral's ships. The pilots were mostly men who had been mates in Baltic traders; and their hesitation about the bearing of the east end of the shoal, and the exact line of deep water, gave ominous warning of how little their knowledge was to be trusted. The signal for action had been made, the wind was fair, not a moment to be lost. Nelson urged them to be steady, to be resolute, and to decide; but they wanted the only ground for steadiness and decision in such cases; and Nelson had reason to regret that he had not trusted to Hardy's single report. This was one of the most painful moments of his life; and he always spoke of it with bitterness. 'I experienced in the Sound,' said he, 'the misery of having the honour of our country intrusted

to a set of pilots who have no other thought than to keep the ships clear of danger, and their own silly heads clear of shot. Everybody knows what I must have suffered: and if any merit attaches itself to me, it was for combating the dangers of the shallows in defiance of them.' At length Mr. Brierley, the master of the *Bellona*, declared that he was prepared to lead the fleet: his judgment was acceded to by the rest: they returned to their ships; and at half-past nine the signal was made to weigh in succession.

Captain Murray, in the *Edgar*, led the way; the *Agamemnon* was next in order; but on the first attempt to leave her anchorage, she could not weather the edge of the shoal; and Nelson had the grief to see his old ship, in which he had performed so many years' gallant services, immovably aground, at a moment when her help was so greatly required. Signal was then made for the *Polyphemus*; and this change in the order of sailing was executed with the utmost promptitude; yet so much delay had thus been unavoidably occasioned, that the *Edgar* was for some time unsupported; and the *Polyphemus*, whose place should have been at the end of the enemy's line, where their strength was the greatest, could get no further than the beginning, owing to the difficulty of the channel; there she occupied, indeed, an efficient station, but one where her presence was less required. The *Isis* followed, with better fortune, and took her own berth. The *Bellona*, Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson, kept too close on the starboard shoal, and grounded abreast of the outer ship of the enemy: this was the more vexatious, inasmuch as the wind was fair, the room ample, and three ships had led the way. The *Russell*, following the *Bellona*, grounded in like manner: both were within reach of shot; but their absence from their intended stations was severely felt. Each ship had been ordered to pass her leader on the starboard side, because the water was supposed to shoal on the larboard shore. Nelson, who came next after these two ships, thought they had

kept too far on the starboard direction, and made signal for them to close with the enemy, not knowing that they were aground; but, when he perceived that they did not obey the signal, he ordered the *Elephant's* helm to starboard, and went within these ships; thus quitting the appointed order of sailing, and guiding those which were to follow. The greater part of the fleet was probably, by this act of promptitude on his part, saved from going on shore. Each ship, as she arrived nearly opposite to her appointed station, let her anchor go by the stern, and presented her broadside to the Danes. The distance between each was about half a cable. The action was fought nearly at the distance of a cable's length from the enemy. This, which rendered its continuance so long, was owing to the ignorance and consequent decision of the pilots. In pursuance of the same error which had led the *Bellona* and the *Russell* aground, they, when the lead was at a quarter less five, refused to approach nearer, in dread of shoaling their water on the larboard shore: a fear altogether erroneous, for the water deepened up to the very side of the enemy's line.

At five minutes after ten the action began. The first half of our fleet was engaged in about half an hour; and by half-past eleven the battle became general. The plan of the attack had been complete; but seldom has any plan been more disconcerted by untoward accidents. Of twelve ships of the line, one was entirely useless, and two others in a situation where they could not render half the service which was required of them. Of the squadron of gun-brigs, only one could get into action; the rest were prevented by baffling currents from weathering the eastern end of the shoal; and only two of the bomb-vessels could reach their station on the Middle Ground, and open their mortars on the arsenal, firing over both fleets. Riou took the vacant station against the Crown Battery, with his frigates; attempting, with that unequal force, a service in which three sail of the line had been directed to assist.

Nelson's agitation had been extreme when he saw himself, before the action begun, deprived of a fourth part of his ships of the line; but no sooner was he in battle, where his squadron was received with the fire of more than a thousand guns, than, as if that artillery, like music, had driven away all care and painful thoughts, his countenance brightened; and, as a bystander describes him, his conversation became joyous, animated, elevated, and delightful. The Commander-in-Chief meantime, near enough to the scene of action to know the unfavourable accidents which had so materially weakened Nelson, and yet too distant to know the real state of the contending parties, suffered the most dreadful anxiety. To get to his assistance was impossible; both wind and current were against him. Fear for the event, in such circumstances, would naturally preponderate in the bravest mind; and, at one o'clock, perceiving that, after three hour's endurance, the enemy's fire was unslackened, he began to despair of success. 'I will make the signal of recall,' said he to his captain, 'for Nelson's sake. If he is in a condition to continue the action successfully, he will disregard it; if he is not, it will be an excuse for his retreat, and no blame can be imputed to him.' Captain Domett urged him at least to delay the signal, till he could communicate with Nelson; but, in Sir Hyde's opinion, the danger was too pressing for delay:—'The fire,' he said, 'was too hot for Nelson to oppose; a retreat he thought must be made—he was aware of the consequences to his own personal reputation, but it would be cowardly in him to leave Nelson to bear the whole shame of the failure, if shame it should be deemed.' Under a mistaken judgment, therefore, but with this disinterested and generous feeling, he made the signal for retreat.

Nelson was at this time, in all the excitement of action, pacing the quarter-deck. A shot through the mainmast knocked the splinters about; and he observed to one of his officers with a smile, 'It is warm work; and this day may be the last to any of us at a moment': and then,

stopping short at the gangway, added with emotion, 'But mark you, I would not be elsewhere for thousands.' About this time the Signal Lieutenant called out, that Number thirty-nine (the signal for discontinuing the action) was thrown out by the Commander-in-Chief. He continued to walk the deck, and appeared to take no notice of it. The signal officer met him at the next turn, and asked if he should repeat it. 'No,' he replied; 'acknowledge it.' Presently he called after him to know if the signal for close action was still hoisted; and being answered in the affirmative, said, 'Mind you keep it so.' He now paced the deck, moving the stump of his lost arm in a manner which always indicated great emotion. 'Do you know,' said he to Mr. Ferguson, 'what is shown on board the Commander-in-Chief? Number thirty-nine!' Mr. Ferguson asked what that meant. 'Why, to leave off action!' Then shrugging up his shoulders, he repeated the words, 'Leave off action? Now, damn me if I do! You know, Foley,' turning to the Captain, 'I have only one eye—I have a right to be blind sometimes': and then, putting the glass to his blind eye, in that mood of mind which sports with bitterness, he exclaimed, 'I do not really see the signal!' Presently he exclaimed, 'Damn the signal! Keep mine for closer battle flying! That's the way I answer such signals! Nail mine to the mast!' Admiral Graves, who was so situated that he could not discern what was done on board the *Elephant*, disobeyed Sir Hyde's signal in like manner: whether by fortunate mistake, or by a like brave intention, has not been made known. The other ships of the line, looking only to Nelson, continued the action. The signal, however, saved Riou's little squadron, but did not save its heroic leader. This squadron, which was nearest the Commander-in-Chief, obeyed, and hauled off. It had suffered severely in its most unequal contest. For a long time the *Amazon* had been firing, enveloped in smoke, when Riou desired his men to stand fast, and let the smoke clear off, that they might see what they were about. A fatal order; for the Danes then got

clear sight of her from the batteries, and pointed their guns with such tremendous effect, that nothing but the signal for retreat saved this frigate from destruction. 'What will Nelson think of us?' was Riou's mournful exclamation, when he unwillingly drew off. He had been wounded in the head by a splinter, and was sitting on a gun, encouraging his men, when, just as the *Amazon* showed her stern to the Trekroner battery, his clerk was killed by his side; and another shot swept away several marines, who were hauling in the main-brace. 'Come, then, my boys,' cried Riou, 'let us all die together!' The words had scarcely been uttered, before a raking shot cut him in two. Except it had been Nelson himself, the British navy could not have suffered a severer loss.

The action continued along the line with unabated vigour on our side, and with the most determined resolution on the part of the Danes. They fought to great advantage, because most of the vessels in their line of defence were without masts; the few which had any standing, had their topmasts struck, and the hulls could not be seen at intervals. The *Isis* must have been destroyed by the superior weight of her enemy's fire, if Captain Inman, in the *Desirée* frigate, had not judiciously taken a situation which enabled him to rake the Dane, and if the *Polyphemus* had not also relieved her. Both in the *Bellona* and the *Isis* many men were lost by the bursting of their guns. The former ship was about forty years old, and these guns were believed to be the same which she had first taken to sea: they were, probably, originally faulty, for the fragments were full of little air-holes. The *Bellona* lost seventy-five men; the *Isis*, one hundred and ten; the *Monarch*, two hundred and ten. She was, more than any other line-of-battle ship, exposed to the great battery; and supporting at the same time the united fire of the *Holstein* and the *Zealand*, her loss this day exceeded that of any single ship during the whole war. Amid the tremendous carnage in this vessel, some

of the men displayed a singular instance of coolness; the pork and peas happened to be in the kettle; a shot knocked its contents about; they picked up the pieces, and ate and fought at the same time.

The Prince Royal had taken his station upon one of the batteries, from whence he beheld the action, and issued his orders. Denmark had never been engaged in so arduous a contest, and never did the Danes more nobly display their national courage. Captain Thura, of the *Indfoedsretten*, fell early in the action, and all his officers, except one Lieutenant and one marine officer, were either killed or wounded. In the confusion, the colours were either struck, or shot away; but she moored athwart one of the batteries in such a situation, that the British made no attempt to board her; and a boat was dispatched to the Prince, to inform him of her situation. He turned to those about him, and said, 'Gentlemen, Thura is killed, which of you will take the command?' Schroedersee, a Captain who had lately resigned, on account of extreme ill-health, answered in a feeble voice. 'I will!' and hastened on board. The crew, perceiving a new Commander coming alongside, hoisted their colours again, and fired a broadside. Schroedersee, when he came on deck, found himself surrounded by the dead and wounded, and called to those in the boat to get quickly on board: a ball struck him at that moment. A Lieutenant, who had accompanied him, then took the command, and continued to fight the ship. A youth of seventeen, by name Villemoes, particularly distinguished himself on this memorable day. He had volunteered to take the command of a floating battery; which was a raft, consisting merely of a number of beams nailed together, with a flooring to support the guns: it was square, with a breastwork full of port-holes, and without masts, carrying twenty-four guns, and one hundred and twenty men. With this he got under the stern of the *Elephant*, below the reach of the stern-chasers; and, under a heavy fire of small arms from the mariners, fought his raft, till the truce was

announced, with such skill, as well as courage, as to excite Nelson's warmest admiration.

Between one and two the fire of the Danes slackened; about two it ceased from the greater part of their line, and some of their lighter ships were adrift. It was, however, difficult to take possession of those which struck, because the batteries on Amak Island protected them; and because an irregular fire was kept up from the ships themselves as the boats approached. This arose from the nature of the action: the crews were continually reinforced from the shore; and fresh men coming on board, did not inquire whether the flag had been struck, or, perhaps, did not heed it; many or most of them never having been engaged in war before—knowing nothing, therefore, of its laws, and thinking only of defending their country to the last extremity. The *Dannebrog* fired upon the *Elephant's* boats in this manner, though her Commodore had removed her pendant and deserted her, though she had struck, and though she was in flames.

By half-past two the action had ceased along that part of the line which was astern of the *Elephant*, but not with the ships ahead and the Crown Batteries. Nelson seeing the manner in which his boats were fired upon, when they went to take possession of the prizes, became angry, and said, he must either send on shore to have this irregular proceeding stopped, or send a fire-ship and burn them. Half the shot from the Trekroner, and from the batteries at Amak, at this time, struck the surrendered ships, four of which had got close together; and the fire of the English, in return, was equally or even more destructive to these poor devoted Danes. Nelson, who was as humane as he was brave, was shocked at this massacre—for such he called it; and with a presence of mind peculiar to himself, and never more signally displayed than now, he retired into the stern-gallery, and wrote thus to the Crown Prince: 'Lord Nelson has directions ro spare Denmark when no longer resisting; but if the fiting is continued on the part of Denmark, Lord Nelson

will be obliged to set on fire all the floating-batteries he has taken, without having the power of saving the brave Danes who have defended them.' A wafer was given him; but he ordered a candle to be brought from the cockpit,' and sealed the letter with wax, affixing a larger seal than he ordinarily used. 'This,' said he, 'is no time to appear hurried and informal.' Captain Sir Frederic Thesiger, who acted as his Aide-de-Camp, carried this letter with a flag of truce. Meantime the fire of the ships ahead, and the approach of the *Ramilies* and *Defence* from Sir Hyde's division, which had now worked near enough to alarm the enemy, though not to injure them, silenced the remainder of the Danish line to the eastward of the Trekroner. That battery, however, continued its fire. This formidable work, owing to the want of the ships which had been destined to attack it, and the inadequate force of Riou's little squadron, was comparatively uninjured; towards the close of the action it had been manned with nearly fifteen hundred men; and the intention of storming it, for which every preparation had been made, was abandoned as impracticable.

During Thesiger's absence, Nelson sent for Freemantle, from the *Ganges*, and consulted with him and Foley, whether it was advisable to advance, with those ships which had sustained least damage, against the yet uninjured part of the Danish line. They were decidedly of opinion that the best thing which could be done was, while the wind continued fair, to remove the fleet out of the intricate channel, from which it had to retreat. In somewhat more than half an hour after Thesiger had been dispatched, the Danish Adjutant-General Lindholm came, bearing a flag of truce, upon which the Trekroner ceased to fire, and the action closed, after four hours' continuance. He brought an inquiry from the Prince. What was the object of Nelson's note? The British Admiral wrote in reply: 'Lord Nelson's object in sending on shore the flag of truce is humanity: he, therefore, consents that hostilities shall cease till Lord Nelson can take

his prisoners out of the prizes, and he consents to land all the wounded Danes, and to burn or remove his prizes. Lord Nelson, with humble duty to his Royal Highness, begs leave to say that he will ever esteem it the greatest victory he ever gained if this flag of truce may be the happy forerunner of a lasting and happy union between my most gracious Sovereign and his Majesty the King of Denmark.' Sir Frederick Thesiger was dispatched a second time with the reply; and the Danish Adjutant-General was referred to the Commander-in-Chief for a conference upon this overture. Lindholm, assenting to this, proceeded to the *London*, which was riding at anchor full four miles off; and Nelson losing not one of the critical moments which he had thus gained, made signal for his leading ships to weigh in succession: they had the shoal to clear, they were much crippled, and their course was immediately under the guns of the Trekroner.

The *Monarch* led the way. This ship had received six-and-twenty shot between wind and water. She had not a shroud standing; there was a double-headed shot in the heart of her foremast, and the slightest wind would have sent every mast over her side. The imminent danger from which Nelson had extricated himself soon became apparent; the *Monarch* touched immediately upon a shoal, over which she was pushed by the *Ganges* taking her amidships; the *Glatton* went clear; but the other two, the *Defiance* and the *Elephant*, grounded about a mile from the Trekroner, and there remained fixed, for many hours, in spite of all the exertions of their wearied crews. The *Desirée* frigate also, at the other end of the line, having gone toward the close of the action to assist the *Bellona*, became fast on the same shoal. Nelson left the *Elephant*, soon after she took the ground, to follow Lindholm. The heat of action was over, and that kind of feeling, which the surrounding scene of havoc was so well fitted to produce, pressed heavily upon his exhausted spirits. The sky had suddenly become overcast; white flags were waving from the mast-heads of so many shattered

ships: the slaughter had ceased, but the grief was to come; for the account of the dead was not yet made up, and no man could tell for what friends he might have to mourn. The very silence which follows the cessation of such a battle becomes a weight upon the heart at first, rather than a relief; and though the work of mutual destruction was at an end, the *Dannebrog* was, at this time, drifting about in flames: presently she blew up; while our boats, which had put off in all directions to assist her, were endeavouring to pick up her devoted crew, few of whom could be saved. The fate of these men, after the gallantry which they had displayed, particularly affected Nelson. The Danes were an honourable foe; they were of English mould as well as English blood; and now that the battle had ceased, he regarded them rather as brethren than as enemies.

The boats of Sir Hyde's division were actively employed all night in bringing out the prizes, and in getting afloat the ships which were on shore. At daybreak, Nelson, who had slept in his own ship, the *St. George*, rowed to the *Elephant*; and his delight at finding her afloat seemed to give him new life. There he took a hasty breakfast, praising the men for their exertions, and then pushed off to the prizes, which had not yet been removed. The *Zealand*, 74 guns, the last which struck, had drifted on the shoal under the Trekroner; and relying, as it seems, upon the protection which that battery might have afforded, refused to acknowledge herself captured; saying, that though it was true her flag was not to be seen, her pendant was still flying. Nelson ordered one of our brigs and three long-boats to approach her, and rowed up himself to one of the enemy's ships, to communicate with the Commodore. This officer proved to be an old acquaintance, whom he had known in the West Indies; so he invited himself on board; and, with that urbanity, as well as decision, which always characterised him, urged his claim to the *Zealand* so well, that it was admitted. The men from the boats lashed a cable round her bowsprit, and the gun-vessel towed her away.

It is affirmed, and probably with truth, that the Danes felt more pain at beholding this, than at all their misfortunes on the preceding day: and one of the officers, Commodore Steen Bille, went to the Trekroner battery, and asked the Commander why he had not sunk the *Zealand*, rather than suffer her thus to be carried off by the enemy.

The English were actively employed in refitting their own ships, securing the prizes, and distributing the prisoners; the Danes in carrying on shore and disposing of the wounded and the dead. It had been a murderous action. Our loss, in killed and wounded, was nine hundred and fifty-three. The loss of the Danes, including prisoners, amounted to about six thousand. The negotiations meantime went on; and it was agreed that Nelson should have an interview with the Prince the following day. Hardy and Freemantle landed with him. This was a thing as unexampled as the other circumstances of the battle. A strong guard was appointed to escort him to the palace, as much for the purpose of security as of honour. The populace, according to the British account, showed a mixture of admiration, curiosity, and displeasure, at beholding that man in the midst of them who had inflicted such wounds upon Denmark. But there were neither acclamations nor murmurs. 'The people,' says a Dane, 'did not degrade themselves with the former, nor disgrace themselves with the latter: the Admiral was received as one brave enemy ever ought to receive another—he was received with respect.' The preliminaries of the negotiation were adjusted at this interview. During the repast which followed, Nelson, with all the sincerity of his character, bore willing testimony to the valour of his foes. He told the Prince that he had been in a hundred and five engagements, but that this was the most tremendous of all. 'The French,' he said, 'fought bravely; but they could not have stood for one hour the fight which the Danes had supported for four. He requested that Villemoes might be intro-

duced to him; and, shaking hands with the youth, told the Prince that he ought to be made an Admiral. The Prince replied: 'If, my Lord, I am to make all my brave officers Admirals, I should have no Captains or Lieutenants in my service.'

The negotiation was continued during the five following days; and, in that interval, the prizes were disposed of. Six line-of-battle ships and eight praams had been taken. Of these the *Holstein*, 64 guns, was sent home. The *Zealand* and all the others were burned, and their brass battering cannon with the hulls were sunk.

On the 9th Nelson landed again, to conclude the terms of the armistice. The conference proceeded amicably on both sides; and as the Commissioners could not agree they broke up, leaving Nelson to settle it with the Prince. After dinner he was closeted with the Prince; and they agreed that the armistice should continue fourteen weeks; and that, at its termination, fourteen days' notice should be given before the recommencement of hostilities.

For the battle of Copenhagen, Nelson was raised to the rank of Viscount: an inadequate mark of reward for services so splendid and of such paramount importance to the dearest interests of England. There was, however, some prudence in dealing out honours to him step by step; had he lived long enough, he would have fought his way up to a dukedom.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN Nelson informed Earl St. Vincent that the armistice had been concluded, he told him also, without reserve, his own discontent at the dilatoriness and indecision which he witnessed, and could not remedy. 'No man,' said he, 'but those who are on the spot, can tell what I have gone through, and do suffer. I make no scruple in saying, that I would have been at Revel fourteen days ago! that, without this armistice, the fleet would never have gone, but by order of the Admiralty; and with it, I dare say, we shall not go this week. I wanted Sir Hyde to let me, at least, go and cruise off Carlscrona, to prevent the Revel ships from getting in. I said I would not go to Revel to take any of those laurels which I was sure he would reap there. Think for me, my dear lord, and if I have deserved well, let me return; if ill, for heaven's sake supersede me, for I cannot exist in this state.'

Fatigue, incessant anxiety, and a climate little suited to one of a tender constitution, which had now for many years been accustomed to more genial latitudes, made him at this time seriously determine upon returning home. 'If the northern business were not settled,' he said, 'they must send more Admirals; for the keen air of the north had cut him to the heart.' He felt the want of activity and decision in the Commander-in-Chief more keenly; and this affected his spirits, and, consequently, his health, more than the inclemency of the Baltic. Soon after the armistice was signed, Sir Hyde proceeded to the eastward,

with such ships as were fit for service, leaving Nelson to follow with the rest, as soon as those which had received slight damages should be repaired, and the rest sent to England.

[Sir Hyde Parker and the fleet anchored at Kioge Bay off the coast of Zealand.]

There the fleet remained, till dispatches arrived from home, on the 5th of May, recalling Sir Hyde, and appointing Nelson Commander-in-Chief.

Nelson wrote to Earl St. Vincent that he was unable to hold this honourable station. Admiral Graves also was so ill, as to be confined to his bed; and he entreated that some person might come out and take the command. 'I will endeavour,' said he, 'to do my best while I remain; but, my dear lord, I shall either soon go to heaven, I hope, or must rest quiet for a time. If Sir Hyde were gone, I would now be under sail.' On the day when this was written, he received news of his appointment. Not a moment was now lost. His first signal, as Commander-in-Chief, was to hoist in all launches, and prepare to weigh; and on the 7th he sailed from Kioge. Part of his fleet was left at Bornholm, to watch the Swedes: from whom he required and obtained an assurance, that the British trade in the Cattegat, and in the Baltic, should not be molested; and saying how unpleasant it would be to him if anything should happen which might, for a moment, disturb the returning harmony between Sweden and Great Britain, he apprised them that he was not directed to abstain from hostilities should he meet with the Swedish fleet at sea. Meantime, he himself, with ten sail of the line, two frigates, a brig, and a schooner, made for the Gulf of Finland. Paul, in one of the freaks of his tyranny, had seized upon all the British effects in Russia, and even considered British subjects as his prisoners. 'I will have all the English shipping and property restored,' said Nelson, 'but I will do nothing violently—neither commit the affairs of my country, nor suffer Russia to mix the affairs of Denmark or Sweden with the detention of our ships.' The wind

was fair, and carried him in four days to Revel Roads. But the Bay had been clear of firm ice on the 29th of April, while the English were lying idly at Kioge. The Russians had cut through the ice in the mole six feet thick, and their whole squadron had sailed for Cronstadt on the third. Before that time it had lain at the mercy of the English. 'Nothing,' Nelson said, 'if it had been right to make the attack, could have saved one ship of them in two hours after our entering the bay.'

It so happened that there was no cause to regret the opportunity which had been lost, and Nelson immediately put the intentions of Russia to the proof. He sent on shore, to say that he came with friendly views, and was ready to return a salute. On their part the salute was delayed, till a message was sent to them to inquire for what reason; and the officer, whose neglect had occasioned the delay, was put under arrest. Nelson wrote to the Emperor (May 9th), proposing to wait on him personally, and congratulate him on his accession, and urged the immediate release of British subjects, and restoration of British property.

The answer arrived on the 16th; Nelson, meantime, had exchanged visits with the Governor, and the most friendly intercourse had subsisted between the ships and the shore. Alexander's ministers, in their reply, expressed their surprise at the arrival of a British fleet in a Russian port, and their wish that it should return; they professed, on the part of Russia, the most friendly disposition towards Great Britain; but declined the personal visit of Lord Nelson, unless he came in a single ship. There was a suspicion implied in this, which stung Nelson: and he said the Russian ministers would never have written thus if their fleet had been at Revel. He wrote an immediate reply, expressing what he felt: he told the court of Petersburg, 'That the word of a British Admiral, when given in explanation of any part of his conduct, was as sacred as that of any sovereign in Europe.' And he repeated, 'that, under other circumstances, it would have

been his anxious wish to have paid his personal respects to the Emperor, and signed with his own hand the act of amity between the two countries.' Having dispatched this, he stood out to sea immediately, leaving a brig to bring off the provisions which had been contracted for, and to settle the accounts. 'I hope all is right,' said he, writing to our Ambassador at Berlin: 'but seamen are but bad negotiators; for we put to issue in five minutes what diplomatic forms would be five months doing.'

On his way down the Baltic, however, he met the Russian Admiral Tchitchagof (May 20th), whom the Emperor, in reply to Sir Hyde's overtures, had sent to communicate personally with the British Commander-in-Chief. The reply was such as had been wished and expected: and these negotiators going, seamen-like, straight to their object, satisfied each other of the friendly intentions of their respective governments. Nelson then anchored off Rostock; and there he received an answer to his last dispatch from Revel, in which the Russian Court expressed their regret that there should have been any misconception between them; informed him, that the British vessels which Paul had detained were ordered to be liberated, and invited him to Petersburg in whatever mode might be most agreeable to himself. Other honours awaited him: the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the Queen's brother, came to visit him on board his ship; and towns of the inland parts of Mecklenburg sent deputations, with their public books of record, that they might have the name of Nelson in them written by his own hand.

From Rostock the fleet returned to Kioge Bay (June 5th). Nelson saw that the temper of the Danes towards England was such as naturally arose from the chastisement which they had so recently received. 'In this nation,' said he, 'we shall not be forgiven for having the upper hand of them: I only thank God we have, or they would try and humble us to the dust.' He saw also that the Danish Cabinet was completely subservient to France;

a French officer was at this time the companion and counsellor of the Crown Prince; and things were done in such open violation of the armistice, that Nelson thought a second infliction of vengeance would soon be necessary.

Nelson was not deceived in his judgment of the Danish Cabinet; but the battle of Copenhagen had crippled its power. The death of the Czar Paul had broken the confederacy; and that Cabinet therefore was compelled to defer, till a more convenient season, the indulgence of its enmity towards Great Britain. Soon afterwards Admiral Sir Charles Maurice Pole arrived to take the command. The business, military and political, had by that time been so far completed, that the presence of the British fleet soon became no longer necessary. Sir Charles, however, made the short time of his command memorable, by passing the Great Belt, for the first time, with line-of-battle ships; working through the channel against adverse winds. When Nelson left the fleet (June 19th), this speedy termination of the expedition, though confidently expected, was not certain; and he, in his unwillingness to weaken the British force, thought at one time of traversing Jutland in his boat, by the canal to Tonnigen on the Eyder, and finding his way home from thence. This intention was not executed: but he returned in a brig, declining to accept a frigate; which few Admirals would have done; especially if, like him, they suffered from sea-sickness in a small vessel. On his arrival at Yarmouth (July 1st), the first thing he did was to visit the hospital, and see the men who had been wounded in the late battle; that victory, which had added new glory to the name of Nelson, and which was of more importance even than the battle of the Nile to the honour, the strength, and security of England.

He had not been many weeks on shore before he was called upon to undertake a service for which no Nelson was required. Buonaparte, who was now First Consul, and in reality sole ruler, of France, was making preparations, upon a great scale, for invading England; but his schemes

in the Baltic had been baffled; fleets could not be created as they were wanted, and his armies, therefore, were to come over in gunboats, and such small craft as could be rapidly built or collected for the occasion. From the former governments of France such threats have only been matter of insult and policy; in Buonaparte they were sincere; for this adventurer, intoxicated with success, already began to imagine that all things were to be submitted to his fortune. We had not at that time proved the superiority of our soldiers over the French; and the unreflecting multitude were not to be persuaded that an invasion could only be effected by numerous and powerful fleets. A general alarm was excited; and, in condescension to this unworthy feeling, Nelson was appointed to a command (July 27th), extending from Orfordness to Beachy Head, on both shores; a sort of service, he said, for which he felt no other ability than what might be found in his zeal.

To this service, however, such as it was, he applied with his wonted alacrity, though in no cheerful frame of mind. Having hoisted his flag in the *Medusa* frigate, he went to reconnoitre Boulogne; the point from which it was supposed the great attempt would be made, and which the French, in fear of an attack themselves, were fortifying with all care. He approached near enough to sink two of their floating-batteries, and to destroy a few gunboats which were without the pier; what damage was done within could not be ascertained. 'Boulogne,' he said, 'is certainly not a very pleasant place this morning; but,' he added, 'it is not my wish to injure the poor inhabitants, and the town is spared as much as the nature of the service will admit.' Enough was done to show the enemy that they could not, with impunity, come outside their own ports. Nelson was satisfied by what he saw, that they meant to make an attempt from this place, but that it was impracticable; for the least wind at W.N.W. and they were lost. The ports of Flushing and Flanders were better points; there we could not tell by our eyes

what means of transport were provided. From thence, therefore, if it came forth at all, the expedition would come. 'And what a forlorn undertaking!' said he; 'consider cross tides, &c. As for rowing, that is impossible. It is perfectly right to be prepared against a mad government; but with the active force your lordship has given me, I may pronounce it almost impracticable.'

That force had been got together with an alacrity which has seldom been equalled. On the 28th of July, we were, in Nelson's own words, literally at the foundation of

Napoleon's medal struck to commemorate the invasion of England: from a cast in the British Museum.

our fabric of defence; and twelve days afterwards we were so prepared on the enemy's coast, that he did not believe they could get three miles from their post. The *Medusa*, returning to our own shores, anchored in the rolling ground off Harwich; and, when Nelson wished to get to the Nore in her, the wind rendered it impossible to proceed there by the usual channel. In haste to be at the Nore, remembering that he had been a tolerable pilot for the mouth of the Thames in his younger days, and thinking it necessary that he should know all that could be known of the navigation, he requested the maritime surveyor of the coast, Mr. Spence, to get him into the Swin, by any channel; for neither the pilots which he had on board, nor the Harwich ones, would take charge of the ship. No

vessel drawing more than fourteen feet had ever before ventured over the Naze. Mr. Spence, however, who had surveyed the channel, carried her safely through. The channel has since been called Nelson's, though he himself wished it to be named after the *Medusa*; his name needed no new memorial.

Nelson's eye was upon Flushing—'To take possession of that place,' he said, 'would be a week's expedition for four or five thousand troops.' This, however, required a consultation with the Admiralty; and that something might be done meantime, he resolved upon attacking the flotilla in the mouth of Boulogne harbour. This resolution was made in deference to the opinion of others, and to the public feeling, which was so preposterously excited. He himself scrupled not to assert, that the French army would never embark at Boulogne for the invasion of England; and he owned, that this boat-warfare was not exactly congenial to his feelings. Into Helvoet or Flushing, he should be happy to lead, if Government turned their thoughts that way. 'Whilst I serve,' said he, 'I will do it actively, and to the very best of my abilities. I require nursing like a child,' he added; 'my mind carries me beyond my strength, and will do me up; but such is my nature.'

The attack was made by the boats of the squadron in five divisions, under Captains Somerville, Parker, Cotgrave, Jones, and Conn. The previous essay had taught the French the weak parts of their position; and they omitted no means of strengthening it, and of guarding against the expected attempt. The boats put off (August 15th) about half an hour before midnight; but, owing to the darkness, and strong currents, which must always make night attacks so uncertain on the coasts of the Channel, the divisions separated. One could not arrive at all; another not till near daybreak. The others made their attack gallantly; but the enemy were fully prepared; every vessel was defended by long poles, headed with iron spikes, projecting from their sides; strong nettings were

braced up to their lower yards; they were moored by the bottom to the shore; they were strongly manned with soldiers, and protected by land batteries, and the shore was lined with troops. Many were taken possession of; and, though they could not have been brought out, would have been burned, had not the French resorted to a mode of offence, which they have often used, but which no other people have ever been wicked enough to employ. The moment the firing ceased on board one of their own vessels they fired upon it from the shore, perfectly regardless of their own men.

The commander of one of the French divisions acted like a generous enemy. He hailed the boats as they approached, and cried out in English: 'Let me advise you, my brave Englishmen, to keep your distance: you can do nothing here; and it is only uselessly shedding the blood of brave men to make the attempt.' The French official account boasted of the victory. 'The combat,' it said, 'took place in sight of both countries; it was the first of the kind, and the historian would have cause to make this remark.' They guessed our loss at four or five hundred: it amounted to one hundred and seventy-two. In his private letters to the Admiralty Nelson affirmed, that had our force arrived as he intended, it was not all the chains in France which could have prevented our men from bringing off the whole of the vessels. There had been no error committed, and never did Englishmen display more courage. Upon this point Nelson was fully satisfied; but he said he should never bring himself again to allow any attack, wherein he was not personally concerned; and that his mind suffered more than if he had had a leg shot off in the affair.

Soon after the conclusion of peace, tidings arrived of our final and decisive successes in Egypt: in consequence of which, the Common Council voted their thanks to the army and navy for bringing the campaign to so glorious a conclusion.

The happiness which Nelson enjoyed in the society of

his chosen friends was of no long continuance. Sir William Hamilton, who was far advanced in years, died early in 1803; a mild, amiable, accomplished man. A few weeks after this event, the war was renewed; and, the day after His Majesty's message to Parliament, Nelson departed to take the command of the Mediterranean fleet (May 18th). The war, he thought, could not be long; just enough to make him independent in pecuniary matters.

He took his station immediately off Toulon (July 8th); and there, with incessant vigilance, waited for the coming out of the enemy. The expectation of acquiring a competent fortune did not last long. 'Somehow,' he says, 'my mind is not sharp enough for prize-money. Lord Keith would have made £20,000, and I have not made £6000.' More than once he says that the prizes taken in the Mediterranean had not paid his expenses, and once he expresses himself as if it were a consolation to think that some ball might soon close all his accounts with this world of care and vexation.

When he had been fourteen months off Toulon, he received a vote of thanks from the city of London, for his skill and perseverance in blockading that port, so as to prevent the French from putting to sea. Nelson had not forgotten the wrong[1] which the city had done to the Baltic fleet by their omission, and did not lose the opportunity which this vote afforded of recurring to that point. 'I do assure your Lordship,' said he, in his answer to the Lord Mayor (August 1st, 1804), 'that there is not a man breathing who sets a higher value upon the thanks of his fellow-citizens of London than myself; but I should feel as much ashamed to receive them for a particular service marked in the resolution, if I felt that I did not come within that line of service, as I should feel hurt at having a great victory passed over without notice. I beg to inform your lordship, that the port of Toulon has never

[1] The city had omitted to thank the fleet for the victory of Copenhagen.

been blockaded by me: quite the reverse. Every opportunity has been offered the enemy to put to sea; for it is there that we hope to realize the hopes and expectations of our country.' Nelson then remarked that the junior flag officers of his fleet had been omitted in this vote of thanks; and his surprise at the omission was expressed with more asperity, perhaps, than an offence, so entirely and manifestly unintentional, deserved; but it arose from that generous regard for the feelings as well as interests of all who were under his command, which made him as much beloved in the fleets of Britain, as he was dreaded in those of the enemy.

Never was any commander more beloved. He governed men by their reason and their affections; they knew that he was incapable of caprice or tyranny; and they obeyed him with alacrity and joy, because he possessed their confidence as well as their love. 'Our Nel,' they used to say, 'is as brave as a lion, and as gentle as a lamb.' Severe discipline he detested, though he had been bred in a severe school; he never inflicted corporal punishment, if it were possible to avoid it, and when compelled to enforce it, he, who was familiar with wounds and death, suffered like a woman. In his whole life Nelson was never known to act unkindly towards an officer. If he was asked to prosecute one for ill behaviour, he used to answer: 'That there was no occasion for him to ruin a poor devil, who was sufficiently his own enemy to ruin himself.' But in Nelson there was more than the easiness and humanity of a happy nature; he did not merely abstain from injury; his was an active and watchful benevolence, ever desirous not only to render justice, but to do good. During the peace, he had spoken in Parliament upon the abuses respecting prize-money; and had submitted plans to Government for more easily manning the navy, and preventing desertion from it, by bettering the condition of the seamen. He proposed that their certificates should be registered, and that every man who had served, with a good character, five years in war,

should receive a bounty of two guineas annually after that time, and of four guineas after eight years. 'This,' he said, 'might, at first sight, appear an enormous sum for the State to pay; but the average life of seamen is, from hard service, finished at forty-five: he cannot, therefore, enjoy the annuity many years; and the interest of the money saved by their not deserting would go far to pay the whole expense.'

To his Midshipmen he ever showed the most winning kindness, encouraging the diffident, tempering the hasty, counselling and befriending both. 'Recollect,' he used to say, 'that you must be a seaman to be an officer; and also, that you cannot be a good officer without being a gentleman.'

A dispute occurred in the fleet, while it was off Toulon, which called forth Nelson's zeal for the rights and interests of the navy. Some young artillery officers, serving on board the bomb-vessels, refused to let their men perform any other duty but what related to the mortars. They wished to have it established, that their corps was not subject to the Captain's authority. The same pretensions were made in the Channel fleet about the same time, and the artillery rested their claims to separate and independent authority on board, upon a clause in the act, which they interpreted in their favour. Nelson took up the subject with all the earnestness which its importance deserved.—'There is no real happiness in this world,' said he, writing to Earl St. Vincent, as First Lord (May 25th 1804). 'With all content, and smiles around me, up start these artillery boys (I understand they are not beyond that age), and set us all at defiance: speaking in the most disrespectful manner of the navy, and its commanders. I know you, my dear lord, so well, that with your quickness the matter would have been settled and perhaps some of them been broke. I am, perhaps, more patient; but I do assure you not less resolved, if my plan of conciliation is not attended to. You and I are on the eve of quitting the theatre of our exploits;

but we owe it to our successors, never, whilst we have a tongue to speak, or a hand to write, to allow the navy to be, in the smallest degree, injured in its discipline by our conduct.' As the surest way of preventing such disputes, he suggested that the navy should have its own corps of artillery; and a corps of marine artillery was accordingly established.

When Nelson took the command, it was expected that the Mediterranean would be an active scene. Nelson well understood the character of the perfidious Corsican, who was now sole tyrant of France; and knowing that he was as ready to attack his friends as his enemies, knew, therefore, that nothing could be more uncertain than the direction of the fleet from Toulon, whenever it should put to sea:—'It had as many destinations,' he said, 'as there were countries.' The momentous revolutions of the last ten years had given him ample matter for reflection, as well as opportunities for observation; the film was cleared from his eyes; and now, when the French no longer went abroad with the cry of liberty and equality, he saw that the oppression and misrule of the powers which had been opposed to them had been the main causes of their success, and that those causes would still prepare the way before them. Even in Sicily (where, if it had been possible longer to blind himself, Nelson would willingly have seen no evil) he perceived that the people wished for a change, and acknowledged that they had reason to wish for it. In Sardinia the same burden of misgovernment was felt; and the people, like the Sicilians, were impoverished by a government so utterly incompetent to perform its first and most essential duties, that it did not protect its own coasts from the Barbary pirates. He would fain have had us purchase this island (the finest in the Mediterranean) from its sovereign, who did not receive £5000 a year from it, after its wretched establishment was paid. There was reason to think that France was preparing to possess herself of this important point, which afforded our fleet facilities for watching

Toulon, not to be obtained elsewhere. An expedition was preparing at Corsica for the purpose; and all the Sardes who had taken part with revolutionary France, were ordered to assemble there. It was certain that if the attack was made it would succeed. Nelson thought that the only means to prevent Sardinia from becoming French, was to make it English, and that half a million would give the king a rich price, and England a cheap purchase. A better, and therefore a wiser policy, would have been to exert our influence in removing the abuses of the government; for foreign dominion is always, in some degree, an evil; and allegiance neither can nor ought to be made a thing of bargain and sale. Sardinia, like Sicily and Corsica, is large enough to form a separate state. Let us hope that these islands may one day be made free and independent. Freedom and independence will bring with them industry and prosperity; and wherever these are found, arts and letters will flourish, and the improvement of the human race proceed.

The proposed attack was postponed. Views of wider ambition were opening upon Buonaparte, who now almost undisguisedly aspired to make himself master of the continent of Europe; and Austria was preparing for another struggle, to be conducted as weakly and terminate as miserably as the former. Spain, too, was once more to be involved in war, by the policy of France; that perfidious government having in view the double object of employing the Spanish resources against England, and exhausting them, in order to render Spain herself finally its prey. Nelson, who knew that England and the Peninsula ought to be in alliance, for the common interest of both, frequently expressed his hopes that Spain might resume her natural rank among the nations. 'We ought,' he said, 'by mutual consent, to be the very best friends, and both to be ever hostile to France.' But he saw that Buonaparte was meditating the destruction of Spain; and that, while the wretched Court of Madrid professed to remain neutral, the appearances of neutrality were scarcely

preserved. An order of the year 1771, excluding British ships of war from the Spanish ports, was revived, and put in force; while French privateers, from these very ports, annoyed the British trade, carried their prizes in, and sold them even at Barcelona. Nelson complained of this to the Captain-General of Catalonia, informing him, that he claimed, for every British ship or squadron, the right of lying, as long as it pleased, in the ports of Spain, while that right was allowed to other powers. To the British Ambassador he said: 'I am ready to make large allowances for the miserable situation Spain has placed herself in; but there is a certain line, beyond which I cannot submit to be treated with disrespect. We have given up French vessels taken within gunshot of the Spanish shore, and yet French vessels are permitted to attack our ships from the Spanish shore. Your Excellency may assure the Spanish government, that in whatever place the Spaniards allow the French to attack us, in that place I shall order the French to be attacked.'

During this state of things, to which the weakness of Spain, and not her will, consented, the enemy's fleet did not venture to put to sea. Nelson watched it with unremitting and almost unexampled perseverance. The station off Toulon he called his home. 'We are in the right fighting trim,' said he, 'let them come as soon as they please. I never saw a fleet altogether so well officered and manned; would to God the ships were half as good! The finest ones in the service would soon be destroyed by such terrible weather. I know well enough, that if I were to go into Malta, I should save the ships during this bad season; but if I am to watch the French, I must be at sea; and, if at sea, must have bad weather: and if the ships are not fit to stand bad weather, they are useless.'

M. La Touche-Tréville, who had commanded at Boulogne, commanded now at Toulon. 'He was sent for on purpose,' said Nelson (March 19th, 1804), 'as he *beat me* at Boulogne, to beat me again; but he seems very loath to try.' One day (May 24th), while the main body of

our fleet was out of sight of land, Rear-Admiral Campbell, reconnoitring with the *Canopus*, *Donegal*, and *Amazon*, stood in close to the port; and M. La Touche, taking advantage of a breeze which sprung up, pushed out with four ships of the line, and three heavy frigates, and chased him about four leagues. The Frenchman, delighted at having found himself in so novel a situation, published a boastful account; affirming that he had given chase to the whole British fleet, and that Nelson had fled before him! Nelson thought it due to the Admiralty to send home a copy of the *Victory's* log upon this occasion. 'As for himself,' he said, 'if his character was not established by that time for not being apt to run away, it was not worth his while to put the world right.' 'If this fleet gets fairly up with M. La Touche,' said he to one of his correspondents, 'his letter, with all his ingenuity, must be different from his last. We had fancied that we chased him into Toulon; for, blind as I am, I could see his water line, when he clued his topsails up, shutting in Sepet[1] (June 14). But from the time of his meeting Captain Hawker in the *Iris*, I never heard of his acting otherwise than as a poltroon and a liar. Contempt is the best mode of treating such a miscreant.' In spite, however, of contempt, the impudence of this Frenchman half angered him. He said to his brother: 'You will have seen Monsieur La Touche's letter of how he chased me, and how I ran. I keep it; and, by God, if I take him, he shall *eat* it.'

Nelson, who used to say, that in sea affairs nothing is impossible, and nothing improbable, feared the more that this Frenchman might get out and elude his vigilance,

[1] *To clue or clew up his topsails* is to draw them up to the yard to which they are attached, to shorten sail. When La Touche did this his water-line shut out Cape Sepet. For this to happen he could not have been far from land and must have appeared on the horizon to Nelson. He therefore shortened sail before he had come very far; he did not show much anxiety to come into contact with the British ships.

because he was so especially desirous of catching him, and administering to him his own lying letter in a sandwich. M. La Touche, however, escaped him in another way. He died (August, 1804), according to the French papers, in consequence of walking so often up to the signal-post upon Sepet, to watch the British fleet. 'I always pronounced that would be his death,' said Nelson. 'If he had come out and fought me, it would, at least, have added ten years to my life.' The patience with which he had watched Toulon, he spoke of, truly, as a perseverance at sea which had never been surpassed. From May, 1803, to August, 1805, he himself went out of his ship but three times; each of those times was upon the King's service, and neither time of absence exceeded an hour.

While he was on this station, the weather had been so unusually severe, that he said the Mediterranean seemed altered. It was his rule never to contend with the gales; but either run to the southward to escape their violence, or furl all the sails, and make the ships as easy as possible. The men, though he said flesh and blood could hardly stand it, continued in excellent health, which he ascribed, in great measure, to a plentiful supply of lemons and onions. For himself, he thought he could only last till the battle was over. One battle more it was his hope that he might fight. 'However,' said he, 'whatever happens, I have run a glorious race.' 'A few months' rest,' he says, 'I must have very soon. If I am in my grave, what are the mines of Peru to me? But to say the truth, I have no idea of killing myself. I may, with care, live yet to do good service to the State. My cough is very bad, and my side, where I was struck on the 14th of February, is very much swelled; at times a lump as large as my fist, brought on occasionally by violent coughing. But I hope and believe my lungs are yet safe.'

Hostilities at length commenced between Great Britain and Spain. That country, whose miserable government made her subservient to France, was once more destined

to lavish her resources and her blood in furtherance of the designs of a perfidious ally. The immediate occasion of the war was the seizure of four treasure-ships by the English. The act was perfectly justifiable; for those treasures were intended to furnish means for France; but the circumstances which attended it were as unhappy as they were unforeseen. Four frigates had been dispatched to intercept them. They met with an equal force. Resistance, therefore, became a point of honour on the part of the Spaniards, and one of their ships soon blew up, with all on board. Had a stronger squadron been sent, this deplorable catastrophe might have been spared; a catastrophe which excited not more indignation in Spain, than it did grief in those who were its unwilling instruments, in the English government, and in the English people.

War between Spain and England was now declared; and on the 18th of January, the Toulon fleet, having the Spaniards to co-operate with them, put to sea. Nelson was at anchor off the coast of Sardinia, where the Madelena islands form one of the finest harbours in the world, when, at three in the afternoon of the 19th, the *Active* and *Seahorse* frigates brought this long-hoped-for intelligence. They had been close to the enemy at ten on the preceding night, but lost sight of them in about four hours. The fleet immediately unmoored and weighed, and at six in the evening ran through the strait between Biche and Sardinia; a passage so narrow that the ships could only pass one at a time; each following the stern lights of its leader. From the position of the enemy, when they were last seen, it was inferred that they must be bound round the southern end of Sardinia. Signal was made the next morning to prepare for battle. Bad weather came on, baffling the one fleet in its object, and the other in its pursuit. Nelson beat about the Sicilian seas for ten days, without obtaining any other information of the enemy, than that one of their ships had put into Ajaccio, dismasted; and having seen that Sardinia, Naples, and

Sicily were safe, believing Egypt to be their destination, for Egypt he ran. The disappointment and distress which he had experienced in his former pursuits of the French through the same seas were now renewed; but Nelson, while he endured these anxious and unhappy feelings, was still consoled by the same confidence as on the former occasion—that, though his judgment might be erroneous, under all circumstances he was right in having formed it.

Baffled thus, he bore up for Malta, and met intelligence from Naples that the French, having been dispersed in a gale, had put back to Toulon. From the same quarter he learned, that a great number of saddles and muskets had been embarked; and this confirmed him in his opinion that Egypt was their destination. That they should have put back in consequence of storms which he had weathered, gave him a consoling sense of British superiority. 'These gentlemen,' said he, 'are not accustomed to a Gulf of Lyons' gale; we have buffeted them for one-and-twenty months, and not carried away a spar.' About the end of the month, he began to fear that the plan of the expedition was abandoned; and, sailing once more towards his old station off Toulon, on the 4th of April, he met the *Phœbe*, with news that Villeneuve had put to sea on the last of March with eleven ships of the line, seven frigates, and two brigs. When last seen, they were steering towards the coast of Africa. Nelson first covered the channel between Sardinia and Barbary, so as to satisfy himself that Villeneuve was not taking the same route for Egypt which Gantheaume had taken before him, when he attempted to carry reinforcements thither. Certain of this, he bore up on the 7th for Palmero, lest the French should pass to the north of Corsica, and he dispatched cruisers in all directions. On the 11th he felt assured that they were not gone down the Mediterranean; and sending off frigates to Gibraltar, to Lisbon, and to Admiral Cornwallis, who commanded the squadron off Brest, he endeavoured to get to the westward, beating against westerly

winds. After five days, a neutral gave intelligence that the French had been seen off Cape de Gatte on the 7th. It was soon after ascertained that they had passed the Straits of Gibraltar on the day following.

Eight days after this certain intelligence had been obtained, he described his state of mind thus forcibly, in writing to the Governor of Malta: 'My good fortune, my dear Ball, seems flown away. I cannot get a fair wind, or even a side wind. Dead foul! Dead foul! But my mind is fully made up what to do when I leave the Straits, supposing there is no certain account of the enemy's destination. I believe this ill-luck will go near to kill me; but as these are times for exertion, I must not be cast down, whatever I may feel.' In spite of every exertion which could be made by all the zeal and all the skill of British seamen, he did not get in sight of Gibraltar till the 30th of April; and the wind was then so adverse, that it was impossible to pass the Gut. He anchored in Mazari Bay, on the Barbary shore; obtained supplies from Tetuan; and when, on the 5th, a breeze from the eastward sprang up at last, sailed once more, hoping to hear of the enemy from Sir John Orde, who commanded off Cadiz, or from Lisbon. 'If nothing is heard of them,' said he to the Admiralty, 'I shall probably think the rumours which have been spread are true, that their object is the West Indies; and, in that case, I think it my duty to follow them, or to the Antipodes, should I believe that to be their destination.' At the time when this resolution was taken, the physician of the fleet had ordered him to return to England before the hot months.

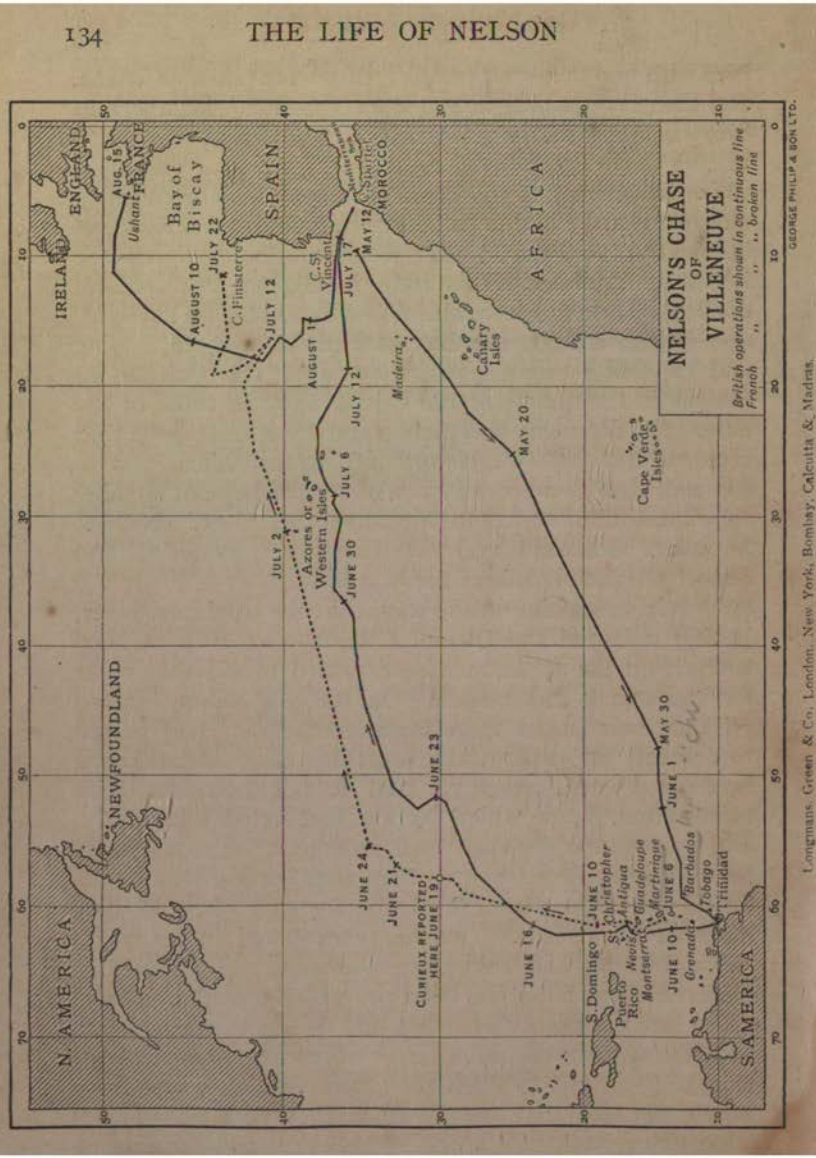
Nelson had formed his judgment of their destination, and made up his mind accordingly, when Donald Campbell, at that time an Admiral in the Portuguese service, the same person who had given important tidings to Earl St. Vincent of the movements of that fleet from which he won his title, a second time gave timely and momentous intelligence to the flag of his country. He went on board the *Victory*, and communicated to Nelson

his certain knowledge that the combined Spanish and French fleets were bound for the West Indies. Hitherto all things had favoured the enemy. While the British commander was beating up against strong southerly and westerly gales, they had wind to their wish from the N.E.; and had done in nine days what he was a whole month in accomplishing. Villeneuve, finding the Spaniards at Carthagena were not in a state of equipment to join him, dared not wait, but hastened on to Cadiz. Sir John Orde necessarily retired at his approach. Admiral Gravina, with six Spanish ships of the line and two French, came out to him, and they sailed without a moment's loss of time. They had about three thousand French troops on board, and fifteen hundred Spanish: six hundred were under orders expecting them at Martinique, and one thousand at Guadaloupe. General Lauriston commanded the troops. The combined fleet now consisted of eighteen sail of the line, six 44-gun frigates, one of 26 guns, three corvettes, and a brig. They were joined afterwards by two new French line-of-battle ships, and one 44. Nelson pursued them with ten sail of the line and three frigates. 'Take you a Frenchman apiece,' said he to his Captains,' and leave me the Spaniards; when I haul down my colours, I expect you to do the same, and not till then.'

The enemy had five-and-thirty days' start; but he calculated that he should gain eight or ten days upon them by his exertions. May 15th he made Madeira, and on June 4th reached Barbadoes, whither he had sent dispatches before him; and where he found Admiral Cochrane, with two ships, part of our squadron in those seas being at Jamaica. He found here also accounts that the combined fleets had been seen from St. Lucia on the 28th, standing to the southward, and that Tobago and Trinidad were their objects. This Nelson doubted; but he was alone in his opinion, and yielded it with these foreboding words: 'If your intelligence proves false, you lose me the French fleet.' Sir William Myers offered to embark

here with two thousand troops ; they were taken on board, and the next morning he sailed for Tobago. An American brig was met with, the master of which, with that propensity to deceive the English and assist the French in any manner, which has been but too common among his countrymen, affirmed that he had been boarded off Granada a few days before by the French, who were standing towards the Bocas of Trinidad. This fresh intelligence removed all doubts. The ships were cleared for action before daylight, and Nelson entered the Bay of Paria on the 7th, hoping and expecting to make the mouths of the Orinoco as famous in the annals of the British navy as those of the Nile. Not an enemy was there ; and it was discovered that accident and artifice had combined to lead him so far to leeward, that there could have been little hope of fetching to windward of Granada for any other fleet. Nelson, however, with skill and exertions never exceeded, and almost unexampled, bore for that island.

Advices met him on the way, that the combined fleets, having captured the Diamond Rock, were then at Martinique, on the 4th, and were expected to sail that night for the attack of Granada. On the 9th Nelson arrived off that island, and there learned that they had passed to leeward of Antigua the preceding day, and taken a homeward-bound convoy. Had it not been for false information, upon which Nelson had acted reluctantly, and in opposition to his own judgment, he would have been off Port Royal just as they were leaving it, and the battle would have been fought on the spot where Rodney defeated De Grasse. This he remembered in his vexation ; but he had saved the colonies, and above two hundred ships laden for Europe, which would else have fallen into the enemy's hands ; and he had the satisfaction of knowing that the mere terror of his name had effected this, and had put to flight the allied enemies, whose force nearly doubled that before which they fled. That they were flying back to Europe he believed, and for Europe he steered in pursuit on the 13th, having disembarked



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the troops at Antigua, and taking with him the *Spartiate*, 74 guns; the only addition to the squadron with which he was pursuing so superior a force. Five days afterwards the *Amazon* brought intelligence that she had spoken a schooner which had seen them, on the evening of the 15th, steering to the N.; and, by computation, eighty-seven leagues off. Nelson's diary at this time denotes his great anxiety, and his perpetual and all-observing vigilance.—'June 21st. Midnight, nearly calm, saw three planks, which I think came from the French fleet. Very miserable, which is very foolish.' On the 17th of July he came in sight of Cape St. Vincent, and steered for Gibraltar.—'June 18th,' his diary says, 'Cape Spartel in sight, but no French fleet, nor any information about them. How sorrowful this makes me! but I cannot help myself.' The next day he anchored at Gibraltar; and on the 20th, says he, 'I went on shore for the first time since June 16th, 1803; and from having my foot out of the *Victory*, two years, wanting ten days.'

Here he communicated with his old friend Collingwood, who, having been detached with a squadron, when the disappearance of the combined fleets and of Nelson in their pursuit, was known in England, had taken his station off Cadiz. He thought that Ireland was the enemy's ultimate object—that they would now liberate the Ferrol squadron, which was blocked up by Sir Robert Calder—call for the Rochefort ships, and then appear off Ushant with three or four-and-thirty sail; there to be joined by the Brest fleet. With this great force he supposed they would make for Ireland—the real mark and bent of all their operations; and their flight to the West Indies, he thought, had been merely undertaken to take off Nelson's force, which was the great impediment to their undertaking.

Collingwood was gifted with great political penetration. As yet, however, all was conjecture concerning the enemy; and Nelson, having victualled and watered at Tetuan, stood for Ceuta on the 24th, still without information of their

course. Next day intelligence arrived that the *Curieux* brig had seen them on the 19th standing to the northward. He proceeded off Cape St. Vincent, rather cruising for intelligence than knowing whither to betake himself; but still without success. Still persevering, and still disappointed, he returned near enough to Cadiz to ascertain that they were not there; traversed the Bay of Biscay; and then, as a last hope, stood over for the north-west coast of Ireland, against adverse winds, till, on the evening of the 12th of August, he learned that they had not been heard of there. Frustrated thus in all his hopes, after a pursuit to which, for its extent, rapidity, and perseverance, no parallel can be produced, he judged it best to reinforce the Channel fleet with his squadron, lest the enemy, as Collingwood apprehended, should bear down upon Brest with their whole collected force. On the 15th he joined Admiral Cornwallis off Ushant. No news had yet been obtained of the enemy, and on the same evening he received orders to proceed, with the *Victory* and *Superb*, to Portsmouth.

CHAPTER IX

At Portsmouth, Nelson at length found news of the combined fleet. Sir Robert Calder, who had been sent out to intercept their return, had fallen in with them on the 22nd of July, sixty leagues west of Cape Finisterre. Their force consisted of twenty sail of the line, three fifty gun-ships, five frigates, and two brigs; his, of fifteen line-of battle ships, two frigates, a cutter, and a lugger. After an action of four hours, he had captured an eighty-four and a seventy-four, and then thought it necessary to bring-to the squadron, for the purpose of securing their prizes. The hostile fleets remained in sight of each other till the 26th, when the enemy bore away. The capture of two ships from so superior a force would have been considered as no inconsiderable victory a few years earlier; but Nelson had introduced a new era in our naval history; and the nation felt, respecting this action, as he had felt on a somewhat similar occasion. They regretted that Nelson, with his eleven ships, had not been in Sir Robert Calder's place; and their disappointment was generally and loudly expressed.

Frustrated as his own hopes had been, Nelson had yet the high satisfaction of knowing that his judgment had never been more conspicuously approved, and that he had rendered essential service to his country by driving the enemy from those islands, where they expected there could be no force capable of opposing them. The West India merchants in London, as men whose interests were more immediately benefited, appointed a deputation to

express their thanks for his great and judicious exertions. It was now his intention to rest awhile from his labours, and recruit himself, after all his fatigues and cares, in the society of those whom he loved. All his stores were brought up from the *Victory*; and he found in his house at Merton the enjoyment which he had anticipated. Many days had not elapsed before Captain Blackwood, on his way to London with dispatches, called on him at five in the morning. (September 2nd.) Nelson, who was already dressed, exclaimed, the moment he saw him: 'I am sure you bring me news of the French and the Spanish fleets! I think I shall yet have to beat them!' They had refitted at Vigo, after the indecisive action with Sir Robert Calder; then proceeded to Ferrol, brought out the squadron from thence, and with it entered Cadiz in safety. 'Depend on it, Blackwood,' he repeatedly said, 'I shall yet give M. Villeneuve a drubbing.'

His services were as willingly accepted as they were offered; and Lord Barham, giving him the list of the navy, desired him to choose his own officers. 'Choose yourself, my lord,' was his reply; 'the same spirit actuates the whole profession. You cannot choose wrong.' Lord Barham then desired him to say what ships, and how many, he would wish in addition to the fleet which he was going to command, and said they should follow him as soon as each was ready. No appointment was ever more in unison with the feelings and judgment of the whole nation.

Unremitting exertions were made to equip the ships which he had chosen, and especially to refit the *Victory*, which was once more to bear his flag. Before he left London he called at his upholsterer's, where the coffin which Capt. Hallowell had given him was deposited, and desired that its history might be engraven upon the lid, saying that it was highly probable he might want it on his return. He seemed, indeed, to have been impressed with an expectation that he should fall in the battle. In a letter to his brother, written immediately after his

return, he had said: 'We must not talk of Sir Robert Calder's battle; I might not have done so much with my small force. If I had fallen in with them, you might probably have been a lord before I wished; for I know they meant to make a dead set at the *Victory*.' The state of his feelings now was expressed in his private journal in these words: 'Friday night (September 13th), at half-past ten, I drove from dear, dear Merton, where I left all which I hold dear in this world to go to serve my King and country. May the great God whom I adore, enable me to fulfil the expectations of my country; and if it is his good pleasure that I should return, my thanks will never cease being offered up to the throne of his mercy. If it is his good providence to cut short my days upon earth, I bow with the greatest submission, relying that he will protect those so dear to me whom I may leave behind. His will be done. Amen! Amen! Amen!'

Early on the following morning he reached Portsmouth; and having dispatched his business on shore, endeavoured to elude the populace by taking a by-way to the beach; but a crowd collected in his train, pressing forward to obtain a sight of his face. Many were in tears, and many knelt down before him, and blessed him as he passed. England has had many heroes; but never one who so entirely possessed the love of his fellow-countrymen as Nelson. All men knew that his heart was as humane as it was fearless; that there was not in his nature the slightest alloy of selfishness or cupidity; but that with perfect and entire devotion he served his country with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, and therefore they loved him as truly and as fervently as he loved England. They pressed upon the parapet to gaze after him when his barge pushed off, and he was returning their cheers by waving his hat. The sentinels, who endeavoured to prevent them from trespassing upon this ground, were wedged among the crowd; and an officer, who, not very prudently upon such an occasion, ordered them to drive

the people down with their bayonets, was compelled speedily to retreat, for the people would not be debarred from gazing till the last moment upon the hero—the darling hero of England.

He arrived off Cardiz on the 29th of Sepember, his birthday. Fearing that if the enemy knew his force they might be deterred from venturing to sea, he kept out of sight of land, desired Collingwood to fire no salute, and hoist no colours; and wrote to Gibraltar to request that the force of the fleet might not be inserted there in the *Gazette*. His reception in the Mediterranean fleet was as gratifying as the farewell of his countrymen at Portsmouth. The officers who came on board to welcome him forgot his rank as commander in their joy at seeing him again. On the day of his arrival, Villeneuve received orders to put to sea the first opportunity. Villeneuve, however, hesitated when he heard that Nelson had resumed the command. He called a council of war; and their determination was, that it would not be expedient to leave Cadiz, unless they had reason to believe themselves stronger by one-third than the British force. In the public measures of this country secrecy is seldom practicable, and seldomer attempted. Here, however, by the precautions of Nelson, and the wise measures of the Admiralty, the enemy were for once kept in ignorance; for as the ships appointed to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet were dispatched singly, each as soon as it was ready, their collected number was not stated in the newspapers, and their arrival was not known to the enemy. But the enemy knew that Admiral Louis, with six sail, had been detached for stores and water to Gibraltar. Accident also contributed to make the French Admiral doubt whether Nelson himself had actually taken the command. An American, lately arrived from England, maintained that it was impossible; for he had seen him only a few days before in London, and at that time there was no rumour of his going again to sea.

The station which Nelson had chosen was some fifty or sixty miles to the west of Cadiz, near Cape St. Mary's.

At this distance he hoped to decoy the enemy out, while he guarded against the danger of being caught with a westerly wind near Cadiz, and driven within the Straits. The blockade of the port was rigorously enforced, in hopes that the combined fleet might be forced to sea by want. The Danish vessels, therefore, which were carrying provisions from the French ports in the bay, under the name of Danish property, to all the little ports from Ayamonte to Algeziras, from whence they were conveyed in coasting boats to Cadiz, were seized. Without this proper exertion of power the blockade would have been rendered nugatory, by the advantage thus taken of the neutral flag. The supplies from France were thus effectually cut off. There was now every indication that the enemy would speedily venture out; officers and men were in the highest spirits at the prospect of giving them a decisive blow, such indeed as would put an end to all further contest upon the seas, Theatrical amusements were performed every evening in most of the ships, and 'God save the King' was the hymn with which the sports concluded. 'I verily believe,' said Nelson (writing on the 6th of October), 'that the country will soon be put to some expense for my account—either a monument, or a new pension and honours; for I have not the very smallest doubt but that a very few days, almost hours, will put us in battle. The success no man can insure; but the fighting them, if they are to be got at, I pledge myself. The sooner the better; I don't like to have these things upon my mind.'

At this time he was not without some cause of anxiety; he was in want of frigates, the eyes of the fleet, as he always called them; to the want of which the enemy before were indebted for their escape, and Buonaparte for his arrival in Egypt. He had only twenty-three ships —others were on the way—but they might come too late; and, though Nelson never doubted of victory, mere victory was not what he looked to, he wanted to annihilate the enemy's fleet. The Carthagena squadron might effect

a junction with this fleet on the one side; and on the other it was to be expected that a similar attempt would be made by the French from Brest; in either case a formidable contingency to be apprehended by the blockading force. The Rochefort squadron did push out, and had nearly caught the *Agamemnon* and *L'Aimable*, on their way to reinforce the British Admiral. Yet Nelson at this time weakened his own fleet. He had the unpleasant task to perform of sending home Sir Robert Calder, whose conduct was to be made the subject of a court-martial, in consequence of the general dissatisfaction which had been felt and expressed at his imperfect victory. Sir Robert Calder, and Sir John Orde, Nelson believed to be the only two enemies whom he had ever had in his profession; and, from that sensitive delicacy which distinguished him, this made him the more scrupulously anxious to show every possible mark of respect and kindness to Sir Robert. He wished to detain him till after the expected action; when the services which he might perform, and the triumphant joy which would be excited, would leave nothing to be apprehended from an inquiry into the previous engagement. Sir Robert, however, whose situation was very painful, did not choose to delay a trial, from the result of which he confidently expected a complete justification; and Nelson, instead of sending him home in a frigate, insisted on his returning in his own 90-gun ship; ill as such a ship could at that time be spared. Nothing could be more honourable than the feeling by which Nelson was influenced; but at such a crisis, it ought not to have been indulged.

On the 9th, Nelson sent Collingwood what he called, in his diary, the 'Nelson touch.' 'I send you,' said he, 'my plan of attack, as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in; but it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can, my dear Coll., have no little jealousies. We have only one great object

in view, that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another, than I have in you; and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend Nelson and Bronte.' The order of sailing was to be the order of battle; the fleet in two lines, with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-deckers. The second in command, having the entire direction of his line, was to break through the enemy, about the twelfth ship from their rear; he would lead through the centre, and the advanced squadron was to cut off three or four ahead of the centre. This plan was to be adapted to the strength of the enemy, so that they should always be one-fourth superior to those whom they cut off. Nelson said, 'That his Admirals and Captains, knowing his precise object to be that of a close and decisive action, would supply any deficiency of signals, and act accordingly. In case signals cannot be seen, or clearly understood, no Captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy.' One of the last orders of this admirable man was, that the name and family of every officer, seaman, and marine, who might be killed or wounded in action, should be, as soon as possible, returned to him, in order to be transmitted to the chairman of the Patriotic Fund, that the case might be taken into consideration, for the benefit of the sufferer, or his family.

About half-past nine in the morning of the 19th, the *Mars*, being the nearest to the fleet of the ships which formed the line of communication with the frigates in shore, repeated the signal that the enemy were coming out of port. The wind was at this time very light, with partial breezes, mostly from the S.S.W. Nelson ordered the signal to be made for a chase in the south-seat quarter. About two the repeating ships announced that the enemy were at sea. All night the British fleet continued under all sail, steering to the south-east; at day-break they were in the entrance of the Straits, but the

enemy were not in sight. About seven one of the frigates made signal that the enemy were bearing north. Upon this the *Victory* hove to, and shortly afterwards Nelson made sail again to the northward. In the afternoon the wind blew fresh from the south-west, and the English began to fear that the foe might be forced to return to port. A little before sunset, however, Blackwood, in the *Euryalus*, telegraphed that they appeared determined to go to the westward. 'And that,' said the Admiral in his diary, 'they shall not do, if it is in the power of Nelson and Bronte to prevent them.' Nelson had signified to Blackwood that he depended upon him to keep sight of the enemy. They were observed so well, that all their motions were made known to him; and, as they wore twice, he inferred that they were aiming to keep the port of Cadiz open, and would retreat there as soon as they saw the British fleet. For this reason he was very careful not to approach near enough to be seen by them during the night. At daybreak the combined fleets were distinctly seen from the *Victory's* deck, formed in a close line of battle ahead, on the starboard tack, about twelve miles to leeward, and standing to the south. Our fleet consisted of twenty-seven sail of the line, and four frigates; theirs of thirty-three, and seven large frigates. Their superiority was greater in size and weight of metal than in numbers. They had four thousand troops on board; and the best riflemen who could be procured, many of them Tyrolese, were dispersed through the ships.

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because on that day his uncle, Captain Suckling, in the *Dreadnought*, with two other line-of-battle ships, had beaten off a French squadron of four sail of the line and three frigates. Nelson with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also; and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. The wind was now from the west, light breezes, with a

long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear down upon the enemy in two lines, and the fleet set all sail. Collingwood, in the *Royal Sovereign*, led the lee line of thirteen ships; the *Victory* led the weather line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin, and wrote the following prayer:

> May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory, and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet! For myself individually, I commit my life to Him who made me; and may His blessing light on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen! Amen! Amen!

Blackwood went on board the *Victory* about six. He found him in good spirits, but very calm; not in that exhilaration which he had felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen. He knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fixed upon the enemy. They tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack, thus bringing the shoals of Trafalgar and St. Pedro under the lee of the British, and keeping the port of Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done; and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve was a skilful seaman, worthy of serving a better master and a better cause. His plan of defence was as well conceived, and as original, as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line, every alternate ship being about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern. Nelson, certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered, that considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, their apparent determination for a fair

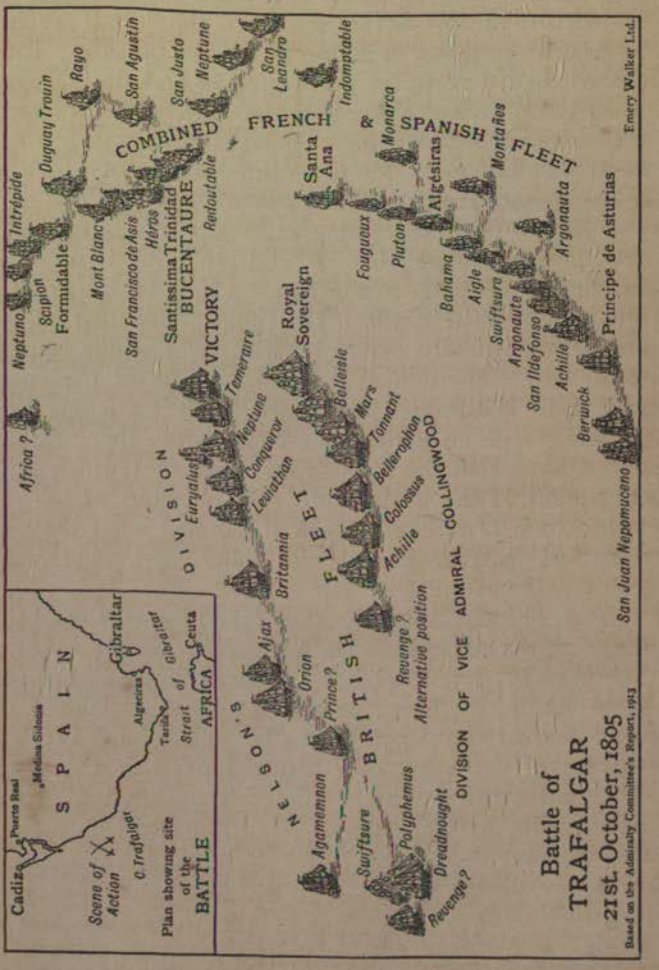
trial of strength, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if fourteen were captured. He replied, 'I shall not be satisfied with anything short of twenty.' Soon afterwards he asked him if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Captain Blackwood made answer, that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were scarcely spoken before that signal was made, which will be remembered as long as the language, or even the memory of England shall endure—Nelson's last signal—'ENGLAND EXPECTS THAT EVERY MAN WILL DO HIS DUTY!' It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed, and the feeling which it expressed. 'Now,' said Lord Nelson, 'I can do no more. We must trust to the great Disposer of all events, and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty.'

He wore that day, as usual, his Admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the left breast four stars of the different orders with which he was invested. Ornaments which rendered him so conspicuous a mark for the enemy were beheld with ominous apprehensions by his officers. It was known that there were riflemen on board the French ships; and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at. They communicated their fears to each other, and the Surgeon, Mr. Beatty, spoke to the Chaplain, Dr. Scott, and to Mr. Scott, the public Secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress, or cover the stars: but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. 'In honour I gained them,' he had said, when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, 'and in honour I will die with them.' Mr. Beatty, however, would not have been deterred by any fear of exciting his displeasure, from speaking to him himself upon a subject in which the weal of England, as well as the life of Nelson, was concerned, but he was ordered from the deck before he could find an opportunity.

This was a point upon which Nelson's officers knew that it was hopeless to remonstrate or reason with him; but both Blackwood, and his own Captain, Hardy, represented to him how advantageous to the fleet it would be for him to keep out of action as long as possible; and he consented at last to let the *Leviathan* and the *Téméraire*, which were sailing abreast of the *Victory*, be ordered to pass ahead. Yet even here the last infirmity of this noble mind was indulged; for these ships could not pass ahead if the *Victory* continued to carry all her sail, and so far was Nelson from shortening sail, that it was evident he took pleasure in pressing on, and rendering it impossible for them to obey his own orders. A long swell was setting into the Bay of Cadiz. Our ships, crowding all sail, moved majestically before it, with light winds from the south-west. The sun shone on the sails of the enemy, and their well-formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable; but the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendour of the spectacle; and, in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other what a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead!

The French Admiral, from the *Bucentaure*, beheld the new manner in which his enemy was advancing—Nelson and Collingwood each leading his line; and pointing them out to his officers, he is said to have exclaimed, that such conduct could not fail to be successful. Yet Villeneuve had made his own dispositions with the utmost skill, and the fleets under his command waited for the attack with perfect coolness. Ten minutes before twelve they opened their fire. Eight or nine of the ships immediately ahead of the *Victory*, and across her bows, fired single guns at her, to ascertain whether she was yet within their range. As soon as Nelson perceived that their shot passed over him, he desired Blackwood, and Captain Prowse, of the *Sirius*, to repair to their respective frigates, and on their way to tell all the Captains of the

line-of-battle ships that he depended on their exertions and that if by the prescribed mode of attack they found



it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them

quickly and closely alongside an enemy. As they were standing on the front of the poop, Blackwood took him by the hand, saying he hoped soon to return and find him in possession of twenty prizes. He replied, 'God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never speak to you again.'

Nelson's column was steered about two points more to the north than Collingwood's, in order to cut off the enemy's escape into Cadiz; the lee line, therefore, was first engaged. 'See,' cried Nelson, pointing to the *Royal Sovereign* as she steered right for the centre of the enemy's line, cut through it astern of the *Santa Anna*, three-decker, and engaged her at the muzzle of her guns on the starboard side. 'See how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action!' Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his commander and old friend, turned to his Captain, and exclaimed, 'Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!' Both these brave officers perhaps at this moment thought of Nelson with gratitude, for a circumstance which had occurred on the preceding day. Admiral Collingwood, with some of the Captains, having gone on board the *Victory* to receive instructions, Nelson inquired of him where his Captain was, and was told in reply that they were not upon good terms with each other. 'Terms!' said Nelson; 'good terms with each other!' Immediately he sent a boat for Captain Rotherham; led him, as soon as he arrived, to Collingwood, and saying, 'Look! yonder are the enemy,' bade them shake hands like Englishmen.

The enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the *Victory*, till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-topgallant sail; then they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging, in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to

strike. For this reason the *Santissima Trinidad*, Nelson's old acquaintance, as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks, and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the *Victory* to be steered. Meantime an incessant raking fire was kept up upon the *Victory*. The Admiral's Secretary was one of the first who fell; he was killed by a cannon-shot while conversing with Hardy. Captain Adair, of the Marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great regard for Mr. Scott; but he anxiously asked, 'Is that poor Scott that's gone?' and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed, 'Poor fellow!' Presently a double-headed shot struck a party of marines who were drawn up on the poop, and killed eight of them, upon which Nelson immediately desired Captain Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterwards a shot struck the fore-brace bits on the quarter-deck, and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle, and bruising his foot. Both stopped, and looked anxiously at each other; each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled, and said, 'This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long.'

The *Victory* had not yet returned a single gun. Fifty of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-topmast, with all her studding sails and her booms, shot away. Nelson declared that in all his battles he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew on this occasion. At four minutes after twelve she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships. Hardy informed him of this, and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied, 'Take your choice, Hardy; it does not signify much.' The Master was ordered to put the helm to port, and the *Victory* ran on board the *Redoutable*, just as her tiller ropes were shot away. The French ship received her with a

broadside; then instantly let down her lower-deck ports, for fear of being boarded through them, and never afterwards fired a great gun during the action. Her tops, like those of all the enemy's ships, were filled with riflemen. Nelson never placed musketry in his tops. He had a strong dislike to the practice, not merely because it endangers setting fire to the sails, but also because it is a murderous sort of warfare, by which individuals may suffer, and a commander now and then be picked off, but which never can decide the fate of a general engagement.

Captain Harvey, in the *Téméraire*, fell on board the *Redoutable* on the other side. Another enemy was in like manner on board the *Téméraire*; so that these four ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together, their heads lying all the same way. The Lieutenants of the *Victory*, seeing this, depressed their guns of the middle and lower decks, and fired with a diminished charge, lest the shot should pass through, and injure the *Téméraire*. And because there was danger that the *Redoutable* might take fire from the lower-deck guns, the muzzles of which touched her side when they were run out, the fireman of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water, as soon as the gun was discharged, he dashed into the hole made by the shot. An incessant fire was kept up from the *Victory* from both sides, her larboard guns playing upon the *Bucentaure* and the huge *Santissima Trinidad*.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer, that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the *Redoutable*, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizen-top, which in the then situation of the two vessels was not more than fifteen yards from that part of

the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor Secretary's blood. Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up. 'They have done for me at last, Hardy,' said he. 'I hope not,' cried Hardy. 'Yes,' he replied; 'my backbone is shot through.' Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately; then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England perhaps would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar. The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men, over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the Midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all except Captain Hardy, the Chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back and the gush of blood he felt momently within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the Surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful; 'for,' said he, 'you can do nothing for me.' All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the *Victory* hurrahed, and at every hurrah a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes and marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Captain Hardy; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared

BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR. (TURNER).

that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried, 'Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!' An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence, Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. 'Well, Hardy,' said Nelson, 'how goes the day with us?' 'Very well,' replied Hardy; 'ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the *Victory*. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing.' 'I hope,' said Nelson, 'none of our ships have struck.' Hardy answered, 'There was no fear of that.' Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. 'I am a dead man, Hardy,' said he; 'I am going fast; it will be all over with me soon.' Hardy observed, that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. 'Oh, no!' he replied; 'it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so.' Captain Hardy then once more shook hands with him, and, with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the Surgeon ascertain this, said to him: 'You know I am gone, I know it. I feel something rising in my breast'—putting his hand on his left side—'which tells me so.' And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great, he replied, 'So great, that he wished he was dead. Yet,' said he, in a lower voice, 'one would like to live a little longer too!' Captain Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned; and, again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly; but fourteen or fifteen at least. 'That's well,' cried Nelson, 'but I bargained for twenty.' And then, in a stronger voice, he said: 'Anchor, Hardy,

anchor.' Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. 'Not while I live, Hardy,' said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed; 'Do you anchor.' His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him in a low voice, 'Don't throw me overboard;' and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the King to order otherwise. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek: and Nelson said, 'Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty.' Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again and kissed his forehead. 'Who is that?' said Nelson; and being informed, he replied, 'God bless you, Hardy.' And Hardy then left him—for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said, 'I wish I had not left the deck; for I shall soon be gone.' Death was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He said to the Chaplain, 'Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner.' His articulation now became difficult; but he was distinctly heard to say, 'Thank God, I have done my duty.' These words he repeatedly pronounced; and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.

Within a quarter of an hour after Nelson was wounded, about fifty of the *Victory's* men fell by the enemy's musketry. They, however, on their part, were not idle; and it was not long before there were only two Frenchmen left alive in the mizen-top of the *Redoutable*. One of them was the man who had given the fatal wound: he did not live to boast of what he had done. An old quartermaster had seen him fire; and easily recognised him, because he wore a glazed cocked hat and a white frock. This quartermaster and two Midshipmen, Mr. Collingwood and Mr. Pollard, were the only persons left in the *Victory's*

poop—the two Midshipmen kept firing at the top, and he supplied them with cartridges. One of the Frenchmen, attempting to make his escape down the rigging, was shot by Mr. Pollard, and fell on the poop. But the old quartermaster, as he cried out, 'That's he—that's he,' and pointed at the other, who was coming forward to fire again, received a shot in his mouth, and fell dead. Both the Midshipmen then fired at the same time, and the fellow dropped in the top. When they took possession of the prize, they went into the mizen-top, and found him dead, with one ball through his head, and another through his breast.

The *Redoutable* struck within twenty minutes after the fatal shot had been fired from her. During that time she had been twice on fire—in her fore-chains and in her forecastle. The French, as they had done in other battles, made use in this of fire-balls and other combustibles; implements of destruction which other nations, from a sense of honour and humanity, have laid aside; which add to the sufferings of the wounded, without determining the issue of the combat: which none but the cruel would employ, and which never can be successful against the brave. Once they succeeded in setting fire, from the *Redoutable*, to some ropes and canvas on the *Victory's* booms. The cry ran through the ship, and reached the cockpit: but even this dreadful cry produced no confusion: the men displayed that perfect self-possession in danger by which English seamen are characterised; they extinguished the flames on board their own ship, and then hastened to extinguish them in the enemy, by throwing buckets of water from the gangway. When the *Redoutable* had struck, it was not practicable to board her from the *Victory*; for, though the two ships touched, the upper works of both fell in so much, that there was a great space between their gangways; and she could not be boarded from the lower or middle decks, because her ports were down. Some of our men went to Lieutenant Quilliam, and offered to swim under her bows, and get up there

THE 'VICTORY' TOWED INTO GIBRALTAR

but it was thought unfit to hazard brave lives in this manner.

What our men would have done from gallantry, some of the crew of the *Santissima Trinidad* did to save themselves. Unable to stand the tremendous fire of the *Victory*, whose larboard guns played against this great four-decker, and not knowing how else to escape them, nor where else to betake themselves for protection, many of them leaped overboard, and swam to the *Victory*: and were actually helped up her sides by the English during the action. The Spaniards began the battle with less vivacity than their unworthy allies, but they continued it with greater firmness. The *Argonauta* and *Bahama* were defended till they had each lost about four hundred men; the *San Juan Nepomuceno* lost three hundred and fifty. Often as the superiority of British courage has been proved against France upon the seas, it was never more conspicious than in this decisive conflict. Five of our ships were engaged muzzle to muzzle with five of the French. In all five the Frenchmen lowered their lower-deck ports, and deserted their guns; while our men continued deliberately to load and fire, till they had made the victory secure.

Once, amidst his sufferings, Nelson had expressed a wish that he were dead; but immediately the spirit subdued the pains of death, and he wished to live a little longer—doubtless that he might hear the completion of the victory which he had seen so gloriously begun. That consolation, that joy, that triumph was afforded him. He lived to know that the victory was decisive; and the last guns which were fired at the flying enemy were heard a minute or two before he expired. The ships which were thus flying were four of the enemy's van, all French, under Rear-Admiral Dumanoir. They had borne no part in the action; and now, when they were seeking safety in flight, they fired not only into the *Victory* and *Royal Sovereign* as they passed, but poured their broadsides into the Spanish captured ships; and they

were seen to back their topsails, for the purpose of firing with more precision. The indignation of the Spaniards at this detestable cruelty from their allies, for whom they had fought so bravely, and so profusely bled, may well be conceived. It was such that when, two days after the action, seven of the ships which had escaped into Cadiz came out, in hopes of retaking some of the disabled prizes, the prisoners in the *Argonauta*, in a body, offered their services to the British prize-master, to man the guns against any of the French ships, saying that if a Spanish ship came alongside, they would quietly go below; but they requested that they might be allowed to fight the French, in resentment for the murderous usage which they had suffered at their hands. Such was their earnestness, and such the implicit confidence which could be placed in Spanish honour, that the offer was accepted, and they were actually stationed at the lower-deck guns. Dumanoir and his squadron were not more fortunate than the fleet from whose destruction they fled. They fell in with Sir Richard Strachan, who was cruising for the Rochefort squadron, and were all taken.

The total British loss in the battle of Trafalgar amounted to one thousand five hundred and eighty-seven. Twenty of the enemy struck. But it was not possible to anchor the fleet, as Nelson had enjoined; a gale came on from the south-west. Some of the prizes went down, some went on shore; one effected its escape into Cadiz; others were destroyed. Four only were saved, and those by the greatest exertions. The wounded Spaniards were sent ashore, an assurance being given that they should not serve till regularly exchanged; and the Spaniards, with a generous feeling which would not perhaps have been found in any other people, offered the use of their hospitals for our wounded, pledging the honour of Spain that they should be carefully attended there. When the storm, after the action, drove some of the prizes upon the coast, they declared that the English who were thus thrown into their hands should not be considered as prisoners

of war; and the Spanish soldiers gave up their own beds to their shipwrecked enemies. The Spanish Vice-Admiral, Alva, died of his wounds. Villeneuve was sent to England, and permitted to return to France. The French Government say that he destroyed himself on the way to Paris, dreading the consequences of a court-martial; but there is every reason to believe that the tyrant, who never acknowledged the loss of the battle of Trafalgar, added Villeneuve to the numerous victims of his murderous policy.

It is almost superfluous to add, that all the honours which a grateful country could bestow were heaped upon the memory of Nelson. His brother was made an earl, with a grant of £6000 a year; £10,000 were voted to each of his sisters; and £100,000 for the purchase of an estate. A public funeral was decreed, and a public monument; statues and monuments also were voted by most of our principal cities. The leaden coffin in which he was brought home was cut in pieces, which were distributed as relics of Saint Nelson—so the gunner of the *Victory* called them; and when, at his interment, his flag was about to be lowered into the grave, the sailors who assisted at the ceremony with one accord rent it in pieces, that each might preserve a fragment while he lived.

The death of Nelson was felt in England as something more than a public calamity. Men started at the intelligence, and turned pale, as if they had heard of the loss of a dear friend. An object of our admiration and affection, of our pride and of our hopes, was suddenly taken from us; and it seemed as if we had never, till then, known how deeply we loved and reverenced him. What the country had lost in its great naval hero—the greatest of our own, and of all former times—was scarcely taken into the account of grief. So perfectly indeed had he performed his part, that the maritime war, after the battle of Trafalgar, was considered at an end. The fleets of the enemy were not merely defeated, but destroyed.

New navies must be built, and a new race of seamen reared for them, before the possibility of their invading our shores could again be contemplated. It was not, therefore, from any selfish reflection upon the magnitude of our loss that we mourned for him. The general sorrow was of a higher character. The people of England grieved that funeral ceremonies, and public monuments, and posthumous rewards, were all which they could now bestow upon him, whom the King, the legislature, and the nation, would have alike delighted to honour; whom every tongue would have blessed; whose presence in every village through which he might have passed would have wakened the church bells, have given schoolboys a holiday, have drawn children from their sports to gaze upon him, and 'old men from the chimney corner,' to look upon Nelson ere they died. The victory of Trafalgar was celebrated indeed with the usual forms of rejoicing, but they were without joy; for such already was the glory of the British navy, through Nelson's surpassing genius, that it scarcely seemed to receive any addition from the most signal victory that ever was achieved upon the seas. And the destruction of this mighty fleet, by which all the maritime schemes of France were totally frustrated, hardly appeared to add to our security or strength; for, while Nelson was living to watch the combined squadrons of the enemy, we felt ourselves as secure as now, when they were no longer in existence.

There was reason to suppose, from the appearances upon opening the body, that, in the course of nature, he might have attained, like his father, to a good old age. Yet he cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done; nor ought he to be lamented, who died so full of honours, and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr; the most awful that of the martyred patriot; the most splendid that of the hero in the hour of victory: and if the chariot and the horses of fire had been vouchsafed for Nelson's translation, he could scarcely have departed in a brighter

blaze of glory. He has left us, not indeed his mantle of inspiration, but a name and an example, which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England: a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength.

NOTES

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3. Chatham stage: stage-coach.
5. Hove with ice-anchors: carried anchors attached to warps on to the ice, then those on board ship hove upon the warps.
10. Master: one of the officers; the word 'master' has a different significance in the merchant service.
12. Frigate: a speedy vessel, corresponding to the modern cruiser.
14. Swivels: guns so mounted that they could be trained from side to side.
16. Made Post: given a commission as commander of the vessel; he was captain by virtue of his position.
19. Quadrant: an instrument for observing celestial bodies. The angles measured by the instrument enabled sailors to determine their position when out of sight of land.
20. Wood and water: necessities of life on board ship.
23. Register Act: by which a register of ships was made and kept in England.
27. Dog-days: the hottest part of the year in July and August; fixed in reference to Sirius, the Dog-star.
28. *Ca Ira*: this was a most daring operation, for the battle-ship *Sans-Culotte*, being to windward, might at any moment have borne down upon the *Agamemnon*. Nelson followed the *Ca Ira* dead astern; thus she could only fire at him with her few stern guns. The ship towing her could not fire at him at all. In order to fire his broadside, he brailed up his after sails. The wind, which was on his beam, then, acting on his headsails, forced the bow of his vessel round and exposed his broadside to the *Ca Ira*; he fired his guns, spread his after sails, and while he loaded the same guns, again pursued her. As soon as he had recovered his position, he repeated the operation, and so forth until he was signalled to rejoin the fleet. It was a very skilful as well as daring operation.

Heave in stays: to come round into the wind until the sails filled upon the opposite (port) tack (i.e., the wind would now be blowing on her port side instead of her starboard side).

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28. Wore: in wearing ship the *Sans-Culotte* obtained the same result as if she had hove in stays, only she went round away from the wind instead of into the wind. In the former operation she would cover much more ground than in the latter.
36. Molehead: the mole protected the harbour from the sea; the privateer was moored across the entrance into the harbour.
37. Broad pendant: signifying that Nelson was commodore.
39. Larboard tack: with the wind on the larboard or port side.
Leeward: under the lee of the British fleet.
41. Luffing up; coming up into the wind.
Wheel shot away: making steering impossible on the *Captain*. Emergency steering gear would be rigged.
42. Bring to: adjust one sail against another so that the ships remained stationary.
Sir John Jervis: his thanks to Nelson were due to the fact that Nelson, by disobeying the general order to tack (p. 40), and wearing his ship instead, prevented the Spanish main body from rejoining the ships that had been cut off.
43. Rear-Admiral of the Blue: of the Blue Squadron of the Navy.
48. Stove: all the boats that landed on the beach to the left of the mole were stove in.
58. Gozo: an island close to Malta.
59. On a wind: sailing close to the wind.
62. Room to swing: the enemy's ships were anchored far enough from each other not to foul each other when the tide changed.
63. Hauling the braces: to trim the sails as the ships altered course to take their allotted stations.
64. Anchor hung: failed to let go.
Van: leading ships.
Veered half a cable: slacked out 100 yards of cable to allow the tide to carry his ship 100 yards farther on.
Athwart-hawse: across the hawsers (anchor cables).
Langridge: irregular-shaped iron shot.
Leeward of centre: the latter end of French line.
85. La Valette: the port of Malta.
92. Damage to masts: owing to fire from Cronenburg batteries defending the Sound.
94. Topsail breeze: a nice sailing breeze under full sail. Being N.W., it was fair for a passage through the Sound.
95. Gun-vessel: small vessel carrying heavy guns.
Radeaus: rafts.
96. Soundings: depth of water ascertained by means of lead and line.
Buoys laid down: to indicate the channel.
Middle ground: a shoal in the channel.
98. Mortar-boat: a boat containing a gun that fired high into the air.
Leading-wind: a favourable wind.

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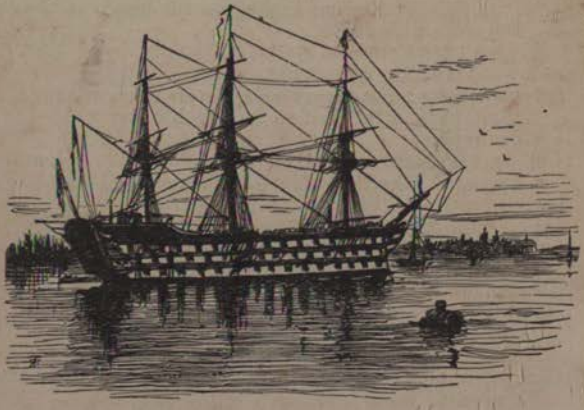
99. Bearing : direction by compass.
101. A cable : two hundred yards.
103. Repeat the signal : hoist the same signal himself.
104. Raking shot : one going lengthways along the ship.
Topmasts struck : lowered.
105. Stern-chasers : guns trained over the stern.
106. Struck : struck their flags.
143. Repeating ships : intermediate ships that passed on signals from the scouting ships to the main fleet.
150. Fore-brace bits : double bollards to which the braces were made fast.
Tiller-ropes : part of the steering gear.
156. Upper works fell in : her upper sides sloped inwards.
159. Backed their topsails : to steady themselves.



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